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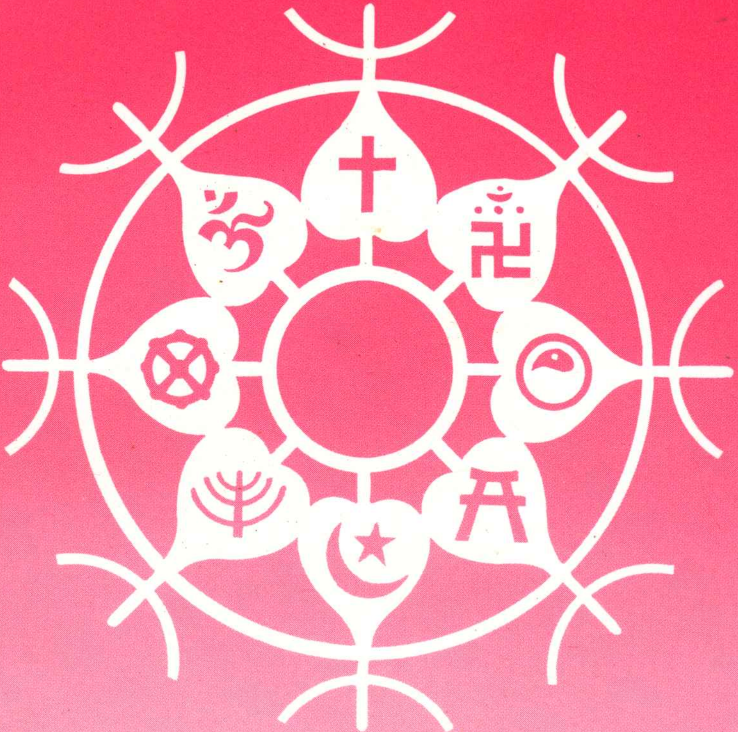

BUSINESS ETHICS

October-December 2004 Vol. XXIX, No. 4

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Editorial

BUSINESS ETHICS

> Business is making inroads into those fields which were traditionally considered to be beyond any possible commercialisation... Ethical principles, however, are on the way out, as business concerns take priority in many a human and humanising activities, to the ultimate detriment of humanity itself...

Mahatma Gandhi, who inculcated and lived a value-based life despite the acknowledged human limitations to live a moral life to its complete perfection, delineates seven social sins. These sins, as he has listed them in the *Young India*, are the following: 1) Politics without principle, 2) Wealth without work, 3) Pleasure without conscience, 4) Knowledge without character, 5) Commerce without morality, 6) Science without humanity, and 7) worship without sacrifice.[1] Two of these sins, the second and the fifth, get special attention in the context of the present issue of the *Journal of Dharma* on Business Ethics. Indeed, it is a recognized aspect of social ethics that business – with all its intricate dynamics – ought to be conducted in an ethical manner. Absence of morality in any human activity will take away its humane and just character altogether. Even if such business deals were to result in amassing disproportionate wealth for an individual and an economic boom for the whole society, Gandhi would consider this to be without any value and virtue. Wealth in itself is not bad; but acquiring wealth for its own sake, that too by unjust means, would go against the spirit of morality, as, according to Gandhi, the means and the ends are inherently related to each other.[2] Thus, the role of business in enhancing human life at different levels shall be fulfilled only if various means adopted by the parties involved in it are basically humane and, thus, moral.

We live in an era that witnesses positive enthusiasm among business corporations in expanding their network globally. Developing economies all over the world – India being one of the largest economies opened up to the *new* aggressive business in the name of economic liberalisation without having had an option on its own[3] – seem to be having no alternative but to open up their markets to this global business. While the people of the developing countries are yet to understand the unjust and exploitative dynamics of the *new* business strategies, a vast majority of the politicians, at least, in the developed countries like the United States of America and the United Kingdom point out the losses their people would be incurring as a result of some practices such as *importing* IT professionals and overseas outsourcing – the last being a minor offshoot of globalization that may give away few of the benefits of globalised business to a pragmatically motivated English educated minority.

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[1] M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 22.10.1925.

[2] "Ends and Means are convertible..." "... As the means so the ends... Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means." M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, 26.12.1924 (page 424) and 17.7.1924 (pages 236-37).

Indeed, it is a legitimate concern of all to see that the most complicated and intricate domains of global business do not lose its ethical flavour and foundations. Whether business is conducted in a localised setting – where a one-to-one relationship is still possible – or at an international level involving multinational companies and global institutions like the IMF and the World Bank, it remains thoroughly a human endeavour and, therefore, it must be totally based upon principles of justice. Justice in business includes claiming and availing each one's due as a human being and, therefore, as a moral agent, whether it is between employer and employee, seller and buyer, or among all those involved in the complicated market networking. Moreover, this foundational principle should also take into account the value of life principle and the common good of the people – at local, national and international levels.

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[3] Both the Congress and BJP-led governments in New Delhi have been gradually opening up, and ever since then, widening the avenues of the Indian version of globalization, both parties being politically motivated in this endeavour, rather than being motivated by the common good of the people of the Indian Republic. The greatly respected economist-turned politician, Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India, the one who initiated the present version of globalization in India while he was the finance minister, I believe, had little choice but to launch what is now euphemistically known as great economic reform; indeed, as far as India is concerned it was an economic revolution, the result of which will have to be judged over a longer period of time, taking into account the stability, integral development and sustenance of the national economy and the enhancement of the common good of average Indian masses.

The prevailing patterns of business on the international scene are characterised by the dynamics of globalisation. Many of the multinational companies already established in the developed world are extending their business terrains on to the 'new' world, which – because of the larger customer bases and in spite of the low levels of purchasing ability of the majority – has a high potential for prospective and lucrative business. Indeed, it is just to plan for profit; otherwise, business would not prosper. At the same time, it is unjust to have profit alone as the motive in indulging in any type of business practice. As multinational companies expand their business base, it is true that the developing nations also partake in some of its fringe benefits, by way of more employment opportunities, quality improvement resulting from cutthroat competition and cash flow. However, it is unjust on the part of any business establishment to ensure exclusively the free-flow of capital (and the siphoning out of huge profits from the host economy), and absolutely neglect and vigorously block the free-flow of labour, which certainly is an instance of economic-balancing mechanism. The first alone would be counter-productive as far any economy is concerned: common good necessitates that business enhances all levels of economic activity with a special emphasis on human life and in relation to the entire cosmic reality. Blockage of the free-flow of labour – violently enforced by the developed economies, to safeguard their interests at the exclusion of others[4] – tends to create slowly deepening, but equally disturbing, feelings of economic high-handedness. In the long run, it would lead to an imbalance and ultimately to a collapse of the high-flying global economy, although this may not be felt so intensely by the developed economies, as they are strong enough to withstand any onslaught of this economic outrage. If global market is to be imbued with moral values, expansion of business empires all over the world must seek a balance in terms of capital and labour flow. Indeed, the responsibility for these is a mutually shared one by the developed and the developing economies, morally both being equal partners in business: there shall be no tolerance of any party exploiting or taking undue advantage of the other. Positively, business shall be a domain that enhances *lokasamgraha*, the total wellbeing of the world, different economies being constituent elements of this wellbeing from the point of view of market economy.

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[4] Developed nations, because of their political advantageous position, use the might of all international organisations – which to a great extent tend to play according to the whims and fancies of the former – to force open the developing economies to multinational companies in the name of economic liberalisation. This unilaterally ensures free flow of capital. However, they also exercise their might in making sure that no provision is made for the enhancement of the host economies at the expense of even a minor share of their profits. Moreover, multinational companies, especially in the IT and banking sectors, like Microsoft, Oracle, etc., tend to offer high salaries to their employees, which no indigenous business enterprise would dare to offer. Though the high returns received by some of the better trained hands should be appreciated, the subtle dynamics behind this phenomenon shall not be ignored. A simple example from the IT sector is so telling: A highly talented and professionally trained executive employed by Oracle draws an annual salary of around Indian Rupees 12,00,000.00. However, this is only one third of the salary the same firm will have to offer to a person of the same calibre and status when employed in the US, the base economy of the said IT giant, as such a person will be offered a minimum of US$ 84,000.00, which would equal to around Indian Rupees

A danger that lurks in this area of business, which is subtly present also in all other areas of international relations, is the unjust distribution of political will and power. As the developed nations continue to be at the helm, and take all the possible advantage in matters pertaining to politics, economy, information or knowledge-based programmes,[5] the developing nations seem to be at the receiving ends and are helpless in asserting and realizing even their just and indispensable demands.

Corruption is all rampant in business and other recesses of human activity. From the monstrous stock market scandals (e.g., Harshad Mehta

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36,12,000.00. Thus, global business, as practised in India, is far more advantageous to the multinational companies, as they can cut costs drastically to increase their profit margins; moreover, they take the best advantage of the creamy layer of India's intelligentsia. At the same time, it must be admitted that a person who draws an annual salary mentioned in the above example is definitely above any average earning Indian from every angle.

[5] The latest and the most subtle, as far as this information age is concerned, is the US government policy not to commit itself in evolving an internationally acceptable mechanism to control and enhance the internet system. Although, all other concerned nations continue to press for an international agreement on the control of the internet and related practices, primarily for the effective monitoring and proper use of the facilities, the US tends to remain so adamant to give in. In fact, an international consensus, the US fears, would gradually take away its monopoly in controlling and exploiting one of the most influential and ultra-fast media of information exchange.

in India) and the high-profiled conniving deceitfulness practised by multinational companies (e.g., Enron in the US) to the bribery paid to a lower-grade office clerk in government offices and the malpractices practised by university staff to tamper transcripts of students in India, an alarming but absolute moral vacuum is seen at the global and local levels. When monetary concerns principally control and alter not only markets and economies, but also individuals and societies as a whole, there seems to be emerging an ethically alienated existence, where aggressive competition, fierce exploitation, killer business instinct, and egoistic individualism become the rule of the day; any one who still continues to subscribe to age-old sound moral principles would be considered to be just another 'inefficient' and 'out-dated' being, an *alien* from the Mars. The high-tech world of the 21st century practices still fraudulent ways of extending the territories of corruption and deception, especially in international business, by way of exploiting the potentially explosive-like print and electronic media. Some developed nations under the auspices of multinational companies host media giants with a view to enhance their business prospects in subtler ways. While information and entertainment are provided free of cost round the clock to an innocent but naïve and uncritical global audience, these multinational companies attempt an ideological propaganda and indoctrination, which would gradually result in a global popular swing ultimately to their advantage. As these shifts take place, the governments in power also do get their political as well as monetary mileages, although the factual and moral foundations erode in and through these subtle but corrupt and immoral practices.

The nature of business dynamics in India, too, has undergone tremendous change. The business arena is no more set in a village context, but shares in the intricacies of the complicated global business. It tends to be all the more worse as corruption at every level – government and corporate levels taking the lead – augments many an unethical practices all around. While almost everyone involved in business tries to take the best advantage of the globalised scenario, the level of personal and collective responsibility seems to be on the decline. This is conspicuous, for example, in the policies of labour unions, which to a large extent tend to resort even to hook and crook, including extreme acts of violence, to get their demands met. Indeed, it is just on the part of the grieving parties – when justice is denied to them – to come together and collectively force the realization of denied justice, even if it is denied by an individual, a corporate or the government machinery itself. However, the same labour unions conveniently and habitually neglect to address the issue of their members contributing creatively towards the common good, by way of carrying out the entrusted tasks in a responsible manner. Labour unions apparently cease to exist once their demands for higher wages and better working conditions are met: this is also to be classified as injustice *per se*. There are repeated instances where trade unionists tend to be making claims for increased pay, without having fulfilled their basic responsibilities as employees. Extreme cases are also reported where the same unions and their members succeed in manipulating their employers to pay even to those who have not put in any work at all.[6] Indeed, therefore, all parties involved in business relations, do have a responsibility to ensure that the realization of rights and duties should go hand-in-hand, without being detrimental to the enhancement of the common good.

Being an active and responsible member with a lot of stake in global business, Indian economy has a wider range of moral responsibilities to fulfil. The opening up of our highly potential market to global business brings about a responsibility on each party to respond to the rights and duties. Though it is true that as long as India remains in a politically weaker position (at the international level) other nations having political and economic prowess will continuously try to ensure that we abide by our duties, we are duty bound to equip ourselves to meet the challenges of "global quality" in all goods and services we will be marketing – both within and outside India.

In order to cope up with the increasing demands on the participants of this global business, especially from the perspective of India, greater emphasis shall be laid on improving the facilities for quality education. It is heartening to see that over the past few years, India is emerging one of the key players in providing professionally trained hands all around the globe, especially in the field of Information Technology. However, it is at the same a pity that villages – from where most of these high profile professionals should be coming forth, if real Indian life situations were to be enhanced according to the global standards – still reel under the shadow of inefficient methods of education, as a result of which many of them tend to be incapable of withstanding the cutthroat competition in the global market. As the governmental agencies alone will not succeed, especially in providing education with global standards, it is essential that private players come into the field. Indeed, there are many private parties who have already been into education, and some of their achievements are definitely of high calibre. However, an aspect of concern in the private investment in education centres around their increasing presence in the cities. That is, most of these privately owned educational institutions tend to cater only to the upper strata of the society, or at least the city-based population, as a result of which high-profile training becomes inaccessible to the millions living in villages. As private investors are primarily concerned about recovering their investment both in monetary and quality terms, it won't be proper to blame them alone. In this given context, the government has to take it upon itself the responsibility to make sure that more educational investments are made in villages in view of providing them access to the high-profiled and quality education at all possible levels. Indian village folks are to be given a new outlook by providing them better educational opportunities and by instilling in them a global perspective both of which are at the same time qualitative, value-based, and life-enhancing. They must be equipped to meet the global challenges, though at the same time without endangering the age-old values of simplicity and humane refinement traditionally associated with village life and, thus, to open up the new and global avenues into Indian villages.

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[6] To cite an extreme example from a village setting in Kerala: a new road, connecting two isolated villages, was under construction through a paddy field. A lot of mud-filling had to be done, and the contractor employed JCBs (high-tech trucks which can unload without manual assistance) to complete the work at a faster pace. As the JCBs started to operate, the local unionists (CPI-M) started agitating against it, and blocked further work. The contractor could restart the operations only after an agreement was reached between him and the unionists, according to which one of the unionists would sit at the work site all day, counting the number of JCBs dropping mud at the work site, and by the evening would collect the pay for unloading, though none of them did actually unload not even a single particle of the mud.

There lurks a danger in the private investment in education, especially as it has been increasingly commercialised. The curriculum, methods of teaching, the orientation of all involved in education, especially students, and the final aim of the whole process of education seem to be determined by the market forces. The goal of education as a process of self-transformation is no more a concern of many of the educators at all; the immediate target is to get technically equipped, so as to be part of the income-generating industry. Education is also made available as another commodity, just on par with any other thing that could be bought in the market. Not only that the great Indian tradition of imparting education as a *dharma* of every member in the society is being sidelined, but if we were to take the latest trends into account,[7] education is just another commodity – one among many goods and services available in the marketplace – made available in the 'education market'. It is justifiable, I would say, if various processes in education were understood merely as a process of imparting training into a particular trade; then, it is expected to equip a person to carry out a task in terms of the job that he trained to perform. But, is education just that alone? No. Education is primarily a method of initiating human person into humaneness and into human community, which basically requires that his humanity and human life are enhanced. It, thus, aims at a transformation in the individual who undergoes the process of education. Can this humane transformation be valued as any other commodity in the marketplace? Can we then reduce the process of education to one of the issues of business? Whether business or not, however, the process of education must be imbued with moral values: the relation between the student and the teacher, student and the institution, etc., should continue to be person-oriented and life enhancing, and not commercially motivated or profit-oriented. The arena of education shall never be reduced to mere business. Indeed, that is essential for realizing its ultimate aim in terms of human transformation and expected contribution to the enhancement of humanity as a whole.

Another non-conventional area of business where ethical values are to be continuously infused is that of healthcare, which has of late become another domain of profitable business. At least, healthcare was a humanitarian service, and it continues to be so in the minds of thousands of men and women who dedicate their entire life for the care and wellbeing of others. However, the situation is changing from an insulated area of humanitarian service to one of business, in which the healthcare providers (including the service staff) are the sellers of goods and services and the patients are merely customers. Unfortunately, a change in the entire training programme of healthcare personnel, availability of modern but expensive facilities, the motivation of many involved in healthcare, especially doctors and nurses and, thus, the final aim of the whole process of healthcare seem to be determined by the market forces. To a great extent, the immediate goal of healthcare is no more the wellbeing of all; the immediate target is to get technically equipped, so as to be part of an *efficient* link in a stable and indispensable, but high income-generating healthcare industry. Quality healthcare providers, mostly private investors, are proliferating as the field of healthcare is also liberalised. Thus, healthcare is also made available as another commodity, just on par with any other thing or service that could be bought in the market. What are the basic factors that tend to motivate these healthcare providers? What are the motivating factors of those who provide training to the future healthcare personnel? What are these new aspirants looking for? Finally, what shall be their valid aspirations and aims in healthcare? Sound ethical principles in the field of healthcare are the need of the hour – both for the agencies that provide healthcare and the patients who are at the receiving end.

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[7] The protection of the rights of students in India is considered to be covered by the "Consumer Protection Act 1986" along with its subsequent amendments. Increasing number of cases and their redressals have been reported from various parts of the country.

These and many others constitute the concerns that motivated *Journal of Dharma* to launch a discussion on Business Ethics. This issue, therefore, attempts to highlight some of the intricate moral dimensions of a dynamic area of human activity centred around commerce and market forces. In the first entry, a reflective article by Prof. V. F. Vineeth, "Markets and Mystics," a critical analysis of the presently vibrant market forces and issues, especially on the unscrupulous dynamics of globalisation as experienced by ordinary people, is undertaken. The author argues that these market forces, which are exploitative at their base, tend to adversely affect the human nature to such an extent that the kernel of human spirit in terms of the mystical dimension is being eclipsed. As he puts it, "Globalisation, because it looks at the world only from the perspective of commercial interest, the unseen yet ennobling dimension of beings is completely neglected." After arguing out his case, by a down-to-earth analysis of some of the issues arising from a global business setting, especially from the perspective of India, the author invites the readers to liberate themselves "from the jaws of consumerism" to a world of "undivided humanity held together by the power of the Spirit where all are free, loving, self-giving and caring for one another," that is, to a truly *globalised* human existence.

"The Business of Education and Ethical Quest," co-authored by Thomas C. Mathew and Kennedy Andrew Thomas, addresses the ethical concerns in relation to the quality of higher education in the emerging new India. The analysis takes into account a shift of emphasis in education from merely being service-oriented to an industry-oriented one. Raising concerns on the privatisation policy as something that apparently questions the basic ethics of equitable distribution in the field of education, the authors highlight some of the salient initiatives incorporated in the revised education policy of the Indian government, and hope that the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) would give a value-based boost to the agencies involved in providing education.

In another theological reflection on Business Ethics, Paulachan Kochappilly addresses commerce as involving human relations and interactions, which, according to him, "should support and promote healthy, happy and holy transactions of all at every level." After analysing various dimensions of business, with a special emphasis on the relationships involved and values cherished, the author concludes that the behaviour of people in business would remain an index of their ethical standard as a community.

In a case analysis on the Enron Scandal, Toji Puthenkaduppil argues for an ethical re-positioning of business as a whole, that is, to uphold the principle of justice and other good values in the business field. In the context of the scandalous fall of Enron, the author finds that ethical principles are to be tightened with a view to avoid such catastrophes in future and to support and enhance sustainability of business, which according to him, would "ensure the harmonious existence of humankind."

Thus, in an age when the markets and economies are emerging as the new gods, temples and churches of the globalised new generation, and as the economic status alone tends to determine a person's significance in the society, lack of a proper ethical perspective will be detrimental to the over all development of a healthy human society. An over-emphasis on pseudo-values that seems to be taking the central stage in the networking of human relations, especially in all business-related realms, a re-orienting of the entire society towards the value of life with a goal of realizing the common good, which shall be permeated by the principle of justice is the need of the hour. Business is a human activity, and it must retain its human face and humane characteristics. It is, therefore, essential that all business transactions are done adhering to ethical principles, which, in turn, would retain its capacity to enhance human life and the interests of the entire cosmos at all levels.

Saju Chackalackal
Chief Editor, JD

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MARKETS AND MYSTICS

How They Look at Our Common Heritage, the Mother Earth

V. F. Vineeth◆

1. Introduction

Brigu was a young man, a beginner with a searching mind, with firm determination to know Brahman. He approached a renowned master (*guru*) and expressed his desire. The *guru* told him that he could not know Brahman from classroom but should perform *tapas*. Here, the word *tapas* means a firm determination to continue the search with a spirit of concentration and readiness to abandon everything else for the sake of what one is searching for. Brigu was very loyal and ready to stick to advice of the master. After the performance of *tapas* for a few days Brigu retuned to the master. The master asked: "Who is Brahman?" Brigu answered: "Brahman is food." Here food means the food of all senses. The world is full of food, i.e., the world provides all needed food for all our five senses. This is the cosmic layer of human existence, the outermost layer of our awareness, namely the world awareness. Though this is the most superficial, this is very fundamental, because this is the awareness with which all human beings start living. Sensational food is the first stage of our awareness. But the human being is expected to go deeper in awareness. Hence, the master told him: "you need some more *tapas*." True to his nature, Brigu returned to perform *tapas*. After a few weeks the boy came back. The master once again asked the same question: "Who is Brahman?" This time Brigu replied: "Brahman is life." Brigu has made progress. He has moved from the outermost layer to the next inner layer. The shift from food to life is a shift from object to

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◆**Prof. (Emeritus) Dr. V. F. Vineeth** cmi, a socially sensitive philosopher-mystic, holds two doctorates – one in western philosophy (Gregorian, Rome) and the other in comparative religion (Oxford), and had been Professor of Metaphysics at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore for a long time. This regular contributor to the *Journal of Dharma* has many books and articles to his credit, and is presently the Acharya of Vidyavanam Ashram, Bangalore.

subject. But in this stage this, in fact, is only an awareness of bodily life. The Sanskrit word for this life is *prāṇa,* the breath. All breathing beings, including insects (*prāṇi*) have this sort of life. In other words, Brigu's awareness is not very deep. It has to go further. Therefore, the master told him: "you should continue your *tapas*." Brigu continued and came back for the third time with a new answer to the question, Who is Brahman? This time he said: "Brahman is mind." Of course, mind gives you ideas. Brigu has moved from the bodily world to the mental world. Though idea is wonderful and capable of moving our mind to higher ideals, the master sent him for further *tapas.* Two times more Brigu came back with two new discoveries about Brahman. He said: "Brahman is wisdom and bliss," respectively. The *guru* sent him again. But Brigu never returned.[1]

I introduce this story only to illustrate where our business world remains and what does it miss. Brigu's first answer is that food is Brahman. This shows that his Brahman-consciousness is very shallow at this stage. But as mentioned earlier, this is the foundation for all further awareness. The first three layers, which Brigu presents, are our human layers, the cosmic, the biological, and the mental. Our market world remains largely within these layers, especially in the first that is the layer of food for all sense faculties. But Brigu did not stop there. He made his search further and brought forward two more key concepts of our deeper realization that is a higher wisdom and a bliss emerging from that. This wisdom is not a mental product, but a response to a new light from God who abides within everyone. Faith or *śradha* is this inner light. It brings along with it an a-cosmic delight because of his closeness to and union with the divine Self, which we in India call Ātman, the innermost Self. In Christian parlance, this is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, abiding within us, teaching us, and leading us to the depth of the divine truth. Brigu is now a mystic. From a luxurious market-world, Brigu has now entered a world of mysticism. Hence, the title, "Markets and Mystics."

2. Globalisation, a Way to the Emergence of the Market World

Anything in the world can be looked at from different perspectives. I propose to focus our attention on two ways of looking at a thing. Think of birds in the air. I can look at it with a commercial eye. I catch them or collect them, multiply them and sell them. Profit is my main motive. In this world the bird becomes an object of my commercial interest. The birds, those are so lovely, and freely flying in the air, practically doing no harm to anyone, now become a business commodity. They are caught, slaughtered and sold in the market. Globalisation makes any item in the world available anywhere. But it looks at everything with a commercial eye, which in most instances lack a contemplative gaze.

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[1] *Taitirīya Upaniṣad*, III.1-6.

Seen from this perspective, the word 'globalisation' apparently brings a glad tiding that our world of every day life is going to be of universal dimension, far more than merely international. But this good news may not last long when we come to grip with the reality of globalisation. This is because the new world promised by the promoters of the globalisation process does not take us beyond this globe that is our earth, nor does it care very much about the spirit within us, which really makes us what we are and is the basis of our natural tendency towards transcendence, promoting us to rise above all limitations.

Globalisation does not promise a heavenly world on earth. It only gives us a commercial world of bitter bargain, where the mightier is always the better and the winning partner. As regards the unequal partners the picture is not that bright as it is made out in the propaganda, largely carried out by the mightier and the logical winners in this global game.

3. Globalisation, a Way to the Eclipse of the Mystical World

In contrast to the commercial look, the same birds can be looked at from a different angle. In this case, economic profit is not the prime objective. The untarnished beauty of nature is looked at with no desire to possess or manipulate. In this art of looking at the things of the world, they are not made objects of the manipulative mind of human beings, rather they are looked upon with awe and reverence, as all of them in one way or other reflect the divine from whom they have been originated. This contemplative gaze gives us delight and never takes us to the market world but to a world of communion with not only other human beings but with the entire creation. They all together make one house and delicately tend to keep an ecological balance within the universe. Jesus looked at the birds of the air in this way and said: "Look at the birds flying around: they do not sow seeds, gather a harvest and put it in barns; yet your father in heaven takes care of them! Aren't you worth much more than birds?" (Mtt. 6:26). In saying this Jesus asks us to see the mystery aspect hidden in the bird and raise our hearts to the providential care of God our heavenly father. The little birds in the air have tremendous power to raise our hearts to God. When you look at the world of birds in this way, you create a lovely relation with those creatures; consider them 'holy' as they raise your hearts to God. You are slowly leaving the world of market and entering the world of mysticism. Mystics move from the outer three layers to the inner layers where the Divine communicates with its own peculiar language of light (wisdom) and delight (bliss). As cosmic layer brings forth food for senses and the mind so also the inner divine Self pours forth the divine food to the soul. The mystics find delight as the outer layers unfold and reveal the hidden symbols of the divine contained in them.

One of the greatest harms brought about by globalisation is that it transforms the world into a global market, not a community of friendly nations. With globalisation we have only markets, huge super- and hypermarkets, where everything is available to those who can afford. Market does not give us a friendly world to live in, but promotes competition and consumerism. We know that in railway station there is a large crowd of people moving around but we do not call it a community. In market every item is looked upon as a market commodity, something to be bought and enjoyed. It is a mere external or ephemeral, pragmatic or a material way of looking at things. Market value is only one aspect of our human life. Of course, human life needs things, commodities, consumer items, etc. But in the globalisation of the world into a market-world we forget many sublime values, which should shape and remain at the foundation of our lives. Things in the world also have many more dimensions to be contemplated upon.

This mystery aspect is totally forgotten when we convert our world into a market-world. Our relation to the things must be much more symbolic and have deeper relation from an existential point of view. True spirituality would prefer to look at things placed at our disposal for the creation of a more humane, a more heavenly world on this earth.

Globalisation, because it looks at the world only from the perspective of commercial interest, the unseen yet ennobling dimension of beings is completely neglected. If our mindset is, thus, ill formed, naturally it will affect our value system, because values are always dependent on our level of consciousness. This takes us to the problem of business ethics.

4. Ethical Considerations

A. Consumerism: Riches to the Rich and Misery to the Poor

Consumerism does not offer anything substantially to the poor villages of India or Asia. The items that are imported from abroad are either sophisticated things like computer or expensive consumer items like Coco-Cola, Pepsi-Cola, Kentucky Chicken, etc. In fact, these items are not necessary for the well being of the villagers in India nor are they affordable to them. The vast majority of the Indian people still live in villages and the main source of their income is agriculture.

TABLE 1

Indian Population and Settlements

According to the censes of 1991 by Govt. of India: Total Population	846,302,688 (846 millions +)
Rural	628,691,676 (628 millions +)
Urban	217,611,012 (217 millions +)
Total Population of India, today	1 Billion + (1000 millions +)

The above table indicates that more than two-third of the population lives in the villages. The rural population lives mainly on agricultural products. Though they are in need of good drinking water, it is still not provided in all villages. The recent studies sponsored by UN have placed India in 120th place in providing good drinking water to the people. Instead, you can see advertisement of Coca-Cola/Pepsi-Cola and other luxury items in these villages or, at least, in all mini-towns in their vicinity. Most of the poor people can only see it, not drink it. In order to understand the reason behind this phenomenon, we have to see, for example, the cost of Coca-Cola in comparison with the cost of some items of daily need.

TABLE 2

Pepsi/Coca-Cola versus Train Journey

A Comparison

A glass of Pepsi/Coco-Cola	Rs. 10
45 kilometres train journey in India	Rs. 10
110 kilometres train journey in India	Rs. 20
45 kilometres train journey in Germany	Euro 3.6 = Rs. 205.00

The table indicates that the money an Indian has to pay for a glass of Pepsi or Coca-Cola is far higher than his or her normal purchasing power! Moreover, the question we should pose, from an ethical point of view, is “How does this help a poor villager in India?”

An average Indian wage earner gets Rs. 70.00 per day. More skilled labourer, e.g., carpenter gets higher wages (i.e., around Rs. 200.00). A plate of Kentucky chicken (2 pieces of chicken, a slice of bread and 1 glass of Cola) costs Rs. 70.00, whereas one plate of Indian *Biriyani* (an Indian spicy rice preparation) with two pieces of chicken in an ordinary restaurant costs only Rs. 25.00. This gives us an idea how expensive are some of the consumer items brought down to India by globalisation.

B. The Asian Markets: A Road between Profit and Poverty

Why so much euphoria and enthusiasm for globalisation in the Asian countries? This is a relevant question. The upper and the upper middle class society in these countries make this enthusiasm and propaganda. They have money at their disposal either from ancestral wealth or from highly paying jobs or business establishments related to modern IT technology. They do not even constitute, at the most, 20% of the population of most Asian countries today. In India, this would amount to two hundred million, i.e., 20% of one billion plus. It is interesting to note that this 20%, i.e., the upper and upper middle class of India, together would make the population of two or three countries in Europe.

TABLE 3

The Upper and Middle Class of Indian People

Total Population of India, today	1 Billion + (1000 millions +)
The upper and upper middle class	200 millions +
Population of Germany (UNO Publication, 1997)	82,19000 (82 millions +)
Population of France	58,542,000 (58 millions +)
Germany + France	140,732,000 (140 millions +)
20% of Indian population (the upper and the upper middle) is more than the total population of these two countries.	

So, the multinationals are interested in the Asian markets and to invest millions of dollars in Asian countries, provided conditions are in favour of their interests. For them, Asia is a ready market, which they can take advantage without as many hurdles as they have to overcome in many a western country. The interest of the multinationals centres mostly on the 20%, and lack any concern for or commitment in the betterment of the living standards of the rest of the populace. So, ultimately, globalisation does not intend the uplift of the people, but the uplift and safeguarding of the business interests of the multinationals alone.

There may be poor people in Germany, France, the European Union, or even in the USA. But the basic needs of such people, such as drinking water, minimum housing facility, etc., are mostly taken care of. This is the big difference between the people in the Southern and Northern part of our globe.

C. Globalisation: A Threat to Local Identity, Culture and Values

Another problem which globalisation brings about is the extinction of local identity, culture and varieties. We have to see this problem vis-à-vis the threat of rising ethnicity and fundamentalism in the modern world. Particularity, ethnicity and identity are aspects of human life, which need adequate recognition. Too much of foreign domination is detrimental to the healthy safeguarding of any good tradition. One reason for the rise of unhealthy fundamentalism and undue emphasis on ethnic identities is reaction against totalitarian sweep of any dominant culture from outside, e.g., from the West in the East. At the same time, a healthy interaction of cultures and an organic growth of indigenous cultures are always welcome. To strike a healthy balance in these will be sometimes difficult, because of the consumerist tendency of the people, especially of the rich who can afford to it, and of the profit-making tendency of the market world. Those who possess money want to possess more and tend to have the world economy under their control as far as possible. For the rich consumers, their greed is made out to be their need. In the thrust of their pushing the world market forward they may weaken or even destroy some of the healthy traditions and well-preserved pluralism in the world. Here I would like to bring to your attention a conversation a social activist had with a Coca-Cola seller: “Are you afraid of Pepsi-Cola as a potential rival?” The activist asked. The dealer of Coca-Cola answers: “No, we are used to compete each other and we know how to do it. But we are afraid of the local drinks now available in India, such as a glass of lemon water with ice for Rs. 2.00 or Rs. 3.00.” What we see in our own country is slowly the local drinks such as lemon juice are disappearing and the chemical-rich, ready-made drinks of multinationals are thriving.

D. Universality and Local Culture

True universality must be rooted in deep awareness of the local and national cultures. Otherwise the future generations will have to meet resurgence of fierce fundamentalism from the extremist groups. Taliban in Afghanistan and some sections of hard-core promoters of Hindutva ideology in India are glowing examples of the same. The poor countries of the East have kept up a variety of bio-diversity of grains, medicinal plants and natural spices. This is a great wealth these countries offer to the rest of the world. Genetically manipulated seeds and medicinal products are coming back to the country promising abundant harvest, which, as their manufacturers – multinationals – claim, could eventually solve the food or health problems of Asia. The golden rice is an example. The result will be that the Indian farmers will eternally remain dependent on these multinational companies to get the seeds they need to cultivate the next cycle of crops. If the farmers start using that they will eventually forget the present way of re-generating the crops from the seed they have preserved, and after a few years of instant boon they would be left at the mercy of the sellers who are great multinationals and whose main interest is not feeding the poor of India but amassing wealth for their own companies, and to siphon it out of the country for ever.

More necessary things conducive to better health, which are generally expensive, should be brought to the market for reasonably affordable prices to the people. Hence, multinationals should come forward to put up small scale factories to purify and preserve nationally produced healthier food stuffs, such as lemon, pineapple, orange, mango, etc., which grow only in tropical countries. The providential arrangement is that God allows the needed fruit items for the people to be grown in the country they are in. A tropical country means much warmer climate and cooler drinks are always very attractive. What really happens is, instead of developing the products of the country into commercial market for cheaper prices, globalisation imports products of the richer countries, naturally, for higher prices. The high-profile propaganda mechanism (e.g., the name-boards of many shops in India carry catchy advertisements of the products of well-placed companies, with only a little space allotted to the name of the shop) mesmerizes the people in such a way that within a short period of time, the Western products become a status symbol in the society. Perhaps, this is a problem that the government of each country should take care of rather than the nations abroad.

E. Indian Medicines and International Patent

At present India has good medicines and their prices are rather affordable. I am apprehensive of what is going to happen to our indigenous medicinal world as a result of the widespread globalisation. Will new brands of expensive medicines from the West with patent claims flood the country, though some of them are based on the medicinal plants traditionally grown in the tropical countries and on the medical-knowledge handed over to the people as a free, sacred trust? Intellectual property claims make things exorbitantly expensive for the common people in India. For example, a traditional medicine for jaundice such as a single doze of medicinal leaves with strict diet control for a few days offers perfect cure. Suppose a western company designs a drug or a capsule out of these leaves and the know-how of the village people, it suddenly becomes an intellectual property right of that company for which the people who were the depositories of this medical-knowledge, and had identified and maintained those medicinal plants and the bio-diversity for over thousands of years have to pay a high price with practically nothing in return; the depository, now being a patient, turns out to be an eternal dependent of the commercial interest of the multinationals! That constitutes the new dynamics of the all-pervasive globalisation tactics. The patent rights of Basmati Rice, Neem Tree, etc., were matters of heated discussion in this country. To be honest, I am not an economist either to address or answer these questions. Yet, I am looking at the whole thing from a human as well as a spiritual point of view, where values other than profit and increase of material/monetary wealth are also to be taken into account.

In the new world of global markets, each country should have freedom: freedom to ban certain items which are not very necessary for a happier life and not conducive to better health, and freedom to import things that are really needed for the overall development of the country. Of course, they will import other needed items. This freedom must be given to all nations. This would mean that there would be room to develop their own local products, enhance local markets, with shared intelligence, if necessary even from abroad, but keeping the product as a national one and, thus, maintaining the variety, multiplicity and diversity in the world. Globalisation easily robs or wipes away many aspects of bio-diversity, which we are now enjoying from the not yet extinct bountiful nature. They are already in a risk and people are beginning to murmur against a kind of consumeristic culture that begins to pervade our culture, ethos and life style.

5. From the World of Global Markets to a Whirlpool of Universal Love

We have to move from the jaws of consumerism to the hearts of universal love. In the market world it is the consumer item that moves globally. This movement is neither deeper nor higher, but horizontal. The so-called global world is not the world of universal love, but of the availability of the market item, and that too only to those who can afford it. The vast majority of the poor people can only look at it, and even if one wants to enjoy one good meal for all members of the family, he/she has to pay almost all he/she earns one day. On the contrary, if we look at the world and its wealth with an eye of mystical love, our world is totally different. Every item speaks to us the providential love of God, the loving God placing everything at the disposal of humanity, as he placed the human beings in the paradise after creating everything for them (Gen. 1:26). The mystics look at the world or the Mother Earth and all that the earth produces from this perspective. They see God, his loving face, in everything.

> This earth is (like) honey for all creatures, and all creatures are (like) honey for this earth. This shining, immortal person who is in this earth and with reference to oneself, this shining, immortal person who is in the body, he, indeed, is just this Self. This is immortal, this is *Brahman*, this is all.[2]

Mystics love everything, without any desire to possess them for themselves. All things are symbols to be meditated upon, and the symbolized is in them. Mystics, therefore, make an inward journey and discover the author of the universe in their own selves. "He is the unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the un-thought thinker, the unknown knower. There is no other seer than he, no other hearer than he, no other thinker than he, no other knower than he. He is your Atman, the inner controller, the immortal."[3] "It is only by seeing, hearing, thinking about, and deeply meditating upon the Atman that all this is known."[4]

St. Francis of Assisi saw the Lord's face in everything and exclaimed: "My God is my all." The sages and saints have always looked at the world not from outside but from inside. They evolve a different kind of global consciousness, a heart full of universal love, enfolding all humanity and all the creatures of the universe. It is consciousness that becomes universal, and the personal desire to possess and consume becomes minimal. This does not, however, mean that they do not want food or shelter. They do need. But they find their basic happiness in a profounder consciousness they have developed, embracing all living beings and everything created. They contain the whole universe within themselves and yet possess nothing! They are people who have understood the real value of things. The real value of things, which is not just the momentary or consumerist, is the representative value that the things unfold to us. The earth produces fruits and does not keep them for itself, but places them at the disposal of all. It is the craving for possessiveness that makes them one's own (i.e., ownership claims), deprives others from communal sharing, and makes an ego-centred world of bitter bargain, beggary and, ultimately, poverty and misery.

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[2] *Bṛhdhāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, II.5,1.

[3] *Bṛhdhāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III.7,23.

[4] *Bṛhdhāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, II.2,4,4-5.

On the other hand, the true human happiness does not consist in the accumulation of things. Global accumulation does not make the human beings internally happy. It is the spirit, God's own power and the consciousness within us, which make us ultimately and permanently happy. This spirit, as the unique union of the Father and the Son, Being and Consciousness, opens up from our own interior centre where he abides as fullness of power, joy and peace. In India, we understand this abiding Spirit as *Saccidānaṅda.*

> The experience of *Saccidānaṅda* carries the soul beyond all merely intellectual knowledge to her very centre, to the source of her being. Only there is she able to hear the Word which reveals within the undivided unity and *advaita* of *Saccidānaṅda* the mystery of the Three Divine Persons: in *sat,* the Father, the absolute Beginning and Source of being; in *cit*, the Son, the divine Word, the Father's Self-knowledge; in *ānaṅda,* the Spirit of love, Fullness and Bliss without end.[5]

Mystics are those who go in search of this inward source of unending happiness. For this sake they abandon everything (*sannyāsa*), opt the life of a wandering monk. They have a heart containing the whole universe from which breaks forth the divine love, which flows incessantly to others. Here sharing is without fear, because the source is everlasting resourcefulness.[6] "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (Jn. 4:13-14). In this level of consciousness, everything one possesses is possessed for the other and is spontaneously shared with the other. A communitarian consciousness that fosters love and concern for the other is the net result of this abiding awareness. But the lady who heard the words of Jesus was on the outer level, the food layer of consciousness, and, hence, asked Jesus to give her this water that she may not come to draw water from the well. The same type of a fallacy we make when we think our satisfaction is from the world of markets not from the unending abundance that wells up from our own depth where God abides. Such awareness makes us happy and leads us to the creation of a new world where selfless love and mutual sharing become spontaneous and natural.

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[5] Abhishiktananda, *Saccidananda*, Delhi: ISPCK, 1974, 178.

The international weekly *Time* has recently published a study on happiness. Typical to the nature of the secular studies it depends on empirical data for its discoveries. However, the study brings out certain valid points. The basic question is "What makes us happy?" 1. Wealth? No; once your basic needs are met other luxuries of life do not add very much to the growth of your happiness. 2. Education? Sorry, No; neither education nor high IQ paves the road to happiness. 3. Youth? No, again; the study shows that older people are happier, they are more consistently happy than the youth. 4. Marriage? Yes, they are happier than the single; but not necessarily lasting. Sharing bodily presence alone does not make us happy. It is union of consciousness that matters. 5. Watching TV? Not at all; people who watch TV for a long period of time constitute un unhappier lot. 6. Religious faith? Yes, "religious faith seems genuinely to lift the spirit; whether it is the God part or community aspect" does this is not certain. However, in either case it is union of hearts that makes us happy. For maintaining steady happiness, "it is important to work on social skills, close interpersonal ties to friends and family and spending time with them."[7]

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[6] "That is fullness, this is fullness / From fullness springs forth fullness / Fullness is taken of from fullness / Fullness alone remains. / Om Peace, Peace, Peace!" *Bṛhdhāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, V.1.1

Seen from this perspective our global markets do not make us necessarily happy. Human happiness needs deeper dimensions. Only communion of hearts will make us happy. Two Greek words, extensively used in the Christian spiritual literature, which express the true nature of love, are very important here, *agape* and *koinonia,* a love to share what I possess with the other and a communion of hearts. Markets cannot give us this, but mystics can.

Once the Divine Spirit as the abiding Self is discovered in the depth of our own being, we see this Spirit operating everywhere. Spirit is like wind and it moves through all and controls all. Meditation brings about expansion of consciousness, just like it works out the deepening of our self-awareness. In striking contrast to the globalisation movement, where material things are made globally accessible, here it is the Spirit within us which becomes more and more cosmic, enfolding humanity and its universe in a joyful embrace of love and self-giving. We should remember the truth that matter has an inherent tendency to divide, whereas Spirit, by nature, has a tendency to unite. What we need in the world is an undivided humanity held together by the power of the Spirit where all are free, loving, self-giving and caring for one another.

> He who dwells in all beings, yet is other than all beings, whom no beings know, whose body is all beings, who controls all beings from within, he is your Self, the inner controller, the immortal.[8]

This spiritual unitary vision of the world, held together in Christ, is very well expressed by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians. Paul unites all human beings as well as the universe they live in, into the one vision of Christ, who's Spirit abides in every one of us.

> Christ is the visible likeness of the invisible God. He is the first-born Son, superior to all created things. For through him God created everything in heaven and on earth, the seen and unseen thing, including spiritual powers, lords, rulers and authorities. God created

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[7] Claudia Wallis, "The New Science of Happiness," *Time*, February 28, 2005, 31-36.

[8] *Bṛhdhāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III.7,15.

> the whole universe through him and for him. Christ existed before all things, and in union with him all things are in their proper place (Col. 1:15-17).

6. Conclusion

Our world is moving in two directions. One is to the enhancement of the outer layers of our humanity. This will include the cosmic commodities, the global availability of them to the mighty and the wealthy, and the creation of a utopia on the earth. This brings affluence, amenities of life, and mega-dimensions of consumerist beatitude to the economically affluent. But, like the prodigal son of the parable of Jesus, sooner or later, people begin to feel the disturbing cry of the inner vacuum which may, eventually, lead to despair, depression, and meaninglessness of life amidst the expected paradise on the earth, especially as this is a life exclusively given to market values.

On the other hand, the mystics take a different turn. Setting their heart and soul not on the pleasure paradise, they continue their search inwardly, finding the unending resourcefulness of meaning, mystery and divine wealth within. Their consciousness grows globally, embracing all, loving all, which specially includes the poor and the marginalized. Indeed, the mystic needs minimum food and a little space to live in.

In this time of ridiculous extravaganza of the rich and the grinding poverty of the poor, we need to strike a balance between unbounded affluence of the mighty and the perennial poverty of the needy.

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THE BUSINESS OF EDUCATION AND ETHICAL QUEST

Thomas C. Mathew &
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1. INTRODUCTION

Who can debate the need of trained and qualified people? This question certainly underscores the importance of a robust higher education system in the emerging new India. In fact, the fast paced changes in the world and education sector demand it.

At this critical juncture, basic education is fundamental to the nation. The tertiary sector not only faces volatility and competition but also determines the nation's economic and technological progress for a globalised era. This leads to many challenges that the educational institutions have to encounter, in turn, leading to complexities and challenges. The reasons are, of course, due to the twining of these challenges and multifarious opportunities along with the regulatory environment and government interface issues. Perhaps, the most important perspective in the business of education is the ethical values behind the purpose and consequences of the initiated actions. Thus, a nation's future can be viewed as a mirror image of its education system.

2. THE ECONOMICS OF EDUCATION

Education no doubt is considered a prime mechanism for economic and social development. They include measures to expand and improve the

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quality and number of educated and skilled human-power in the process of national development. The resources involved in the formation of human capital and the corresponding increments broadly assess the economic value of education. This revelation brings forth an evaluation in this process of economic development, keeping in mind the productivity of labour force. The value of education is the outcome of the relationship between educated manpower, physical resources that results in increments in per capita and net domestic product at a given time.[1]

Education in general and higher education in particular play a pivotal role in the development of any nation. Its responsibility as a significant ingredient in the future economy stands testified. All predictions indicate profound and rapid changes in technology and society with far reaching alternatives to the framework of economic activity.[2] The only constant thing in the world is change. Undoubtedly, higher education is expected to be a major constituent in this transformation of society to cope with multi-dimensional change. Thus, the benefits of education include contributions made to society in terms of growth of employment, equitable distribution of income and growth of national output.

3. TRANSITIONS IN EDUCATION

Today the concept of education holds up a torchlight that signifies its onus as a light that guides life in all its confrontations. Development of character and total maturity are, of course, basic ingredients though the need to inculcate the ability to solve problems of life, satisfying human needs and contributing to development and progress of life, add that essential flavour that call for no justification. Therefore, the role of education is increasingly becoming more functional.

The *guru-shisya concept*, though still in vogue theoretically, no longer holds well. As education now stands as a culture and has been reaching out to the masses with a different appeal, it has caused a huge downturn in this structure. The order of day is extension and improvement of education on a large scale. Indeed, the number of schools and colleges are on the increase. There is, therefore, a growing transition in the way education is approached, whether updating knowledge, improving delivery systems, administering or managing institutions.

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[1] Joseph K. Jose, "Modelling the Macro-Economic Effects of Human Resource Utilisation in Developing Countries," in Powar K. B. ed., *Higher Education for Human Development*, New Delhi: Association of Indian Universities, 2000.

[2] Cited in Harvey Lee and Knight Peter J., *Transforming Higher Education*, Buckingham and Bristol: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, 1996.

Moreover, education involves huge investments and expenditure. Spatial restrictions and fixed years of learning are now disappearing. Technical innovations have led to a revolution where learning is becoming all the more dynamic and continuous. Indeed, education is no longer restricted to the walls of a classroom.

India's college and university network is expanding helping the masses to access higher education in the Indian context. However, it is able to accommodate only a tiny fraction of the 'college age' population.[3] Though the enhancement in the enrolment is at about 5 percent annually over the past decades, the gross enrolment rate of Indians in higher education sector is at 7 percent. This may seem comparatively higher, though it is lower than the average for Asia as a whole (11 percent) and much lower than OECD Countries.[4] Another trend indicates that the priorities and interests are towards professional courses, especially engineering, management, and medicine.

This new form of education is now shifting from merely being service-oriented to an industry-oriented one. Though the education sector is service-oriented, the recipient of its products looks at a highly marketable sector. The trends are now leading to establishments of universities and joint programs overseas. The significance of WTO and GATS as recent implications of change will further influence this proposition.

4. BUSINESS ETHICS AND EDUCATION

Education deserves to be seen as a service sector and today, its commercialisation is being questioned on ethical grounds. An understanding of business ethics is the need of the hour. This requires a study that deals with commercial transactions. Basically *ethics* in business include values governing commercial transaction not only among people and among organizations, but also among persons within organizations and political processes that regulate such transactions. The chain of cause and effect between behaviour and consequences is intangible.

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[3] Committee on India Vision 2020, December, 2002.

[4] Kapu Devesh and Metha Pratap Bhanu, *Indian Higher Education Reform: From Half-baked Socialism to Half-baked Capitalism*, Working Paper No. 108, Harvard: Centre for International Development at Harvard University, 2004.

Therefore, an initiator of action begins with an inventory of moral values.

These get converted to intentions for action, which then get articulated as actual behaviour. All such behaviour is consequential. It may either damage or enhance the values of the affected person.[5] For example, according to the *Kural*, the Tamil classic on ethics, "the state which fosters agricultural productivity will enjoy pre-eminence."[6] This means that the productivity of the farmer is of prime value. That is, we start with a moral value, then the value can be converted into an intention of getting better procurement of related products.

The link leads to enhancement of revenues. However, deceptive measures in terms of unhealthy publicity may be one of the causes of a collapse. Despite this, ethical dimensions cannot stop at the choice of either values or intention or behaviour. The consequences have to be considered. The formula for ethics, therefore, stands as "consequences and values plus knowledge = ethics."[7]

Ethically, corresponding to the business analogy, education is considered a human right (it, thus, becomes a value), though elementary education should be compulsory. Technical and professional education should be made generally available (Intentions). Education involves huge costs. The reduction in investments and expenditure has led to demands for higher accountability and financial stringency in education. Both public and private sectors compete for what it regards as fair. It is not a matter of simple cost effectiveness or returns on investment. Each of the sectors vying for quality has pushed education towards privatisation, corporatisation and commercialisation (Consequences).

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[5] Sekhar R. C., *Ethical Choices in Business*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997.

[6] *Kural*, 1034, cited in Sekhar, *Ethical Choices in Business*, 5.

[7] *Kural*, 1034, cited in Sekhar, *Ethical Choices in Business*, 5.

Though, as far as Indian philosophy of education is concerned, knowledge acquisition and creation of wealth have always been on opposite poles in line with the paradigm of *Saraswati and Lakshmi* paradox, the privatisation policy has questioned the basic ethics of equitable distribution. Thus, it is necessary to focus on the concept of globalisation, privatisation and commercialisation of education.

5. GLOBALISATION AND EDUCATION

Globalisation has affected education deeply the world over. Though globalisation involves economic, technological, political and cultural forces, the economic process is governed by a market-oriented philosophy. The boom in technology has led to a wide reach of information. This insight has touched all communities and has affected it in its own way. It has changed the very fundamentals of human and social life.[8]

Globalisation benefits the countries with highly skilled human capital. At the same time, it is a curse for those countries without specialized human capital. The emphasis of globalisation is empowerment and better realization of human potential. The focus is to reach a powerful global economy.[9] Under globalisation, reduction of state role, the movement of capital, free market economy, expansion of capitalism, the information revolution, etc., become imminent.[10] Marginalisation of weak states, market monopolies, permanent jobs tuned with project based jobs and education as a life-long learning process, etc., are added features of globalisation.[11] As the process of globalisation is technology and knowledge driven, it affects the content and structure of education. Only countries with a high level of human knowledge and skill will be able to participate and compete in this new global order.

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[8] Carnoy M., *Globalization and Educational Reforms: What Planners Need to Know*, Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning, 1999.

[9] Rani Geetha P., "Economic Reforms and Financing Higher Education in India," IJEB 3 (2004), 1.

[10] Daun H., "World System, Globalization and Governance," in Daun ed., *World Systems, Globalization and Educational Change*, Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2003.

[11] Nyozov S., "Globalization and Teachers: Life and Work (Case Studies from Rural Tajikistan)," in Daun H. ed., *World System, Globalization and Educational Change*, Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2003.

Globalisation no doubt has brought a worldwide demand for certain skills, namely English, Mathematics, reasoning, scientific and logical programming.[12] In this globalising procedure of education the price is to be made note of. As education becomes narrower, there may be no real expansion of disciplines of social sciences and pure sciences. The key services of economic reform policies, therefore, critically depend upon the competence of human capital. Individual and private consumerism and competition become the order of the day. Education for an equal global society such as those against ethnic inequalities, or education for justice, human rights and peace appears a distant dream. Secular values are spread at the cost of religious values.

Education under globalisation has, however, opened up opportunities and facilitated the legitimisation of equal rights of all to education, women's right to education, right to vote and increased participation in societal affairs.[13] The international institutional decade of education for sustainable development, during 2005-2015, is a positive move towards the very ethical outcome of globalisation, challenging educational implications.

6. PRIVATISATION OF EDUCATION

The government may see privatisation of education as a means to reduce its own burden of providing standard education. Privatisation has nevertheless faced the brickbats.

Iheme defines privatisation as "any of a variety of measures adopted by government to expose a public enterprise to competition or to bring in private ownership or control or management into a public enterprise and accordingly to reduce the usual weight of public ownership or control or management."[14] However, in a strict sense, privatisation means the transfer of the ownership (and all the incidence of ownership, including management) of a public enterprise to private investors. The latter meaning has the advantage of helping one to draw a line between privatisation and other varieties of public enterprise reform. Similarly, Starr defines privatisation as "a shift from the public to the private sector, not shifts within sectors."[15]

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[12] Nyozov, "Globalization and Teachers," 8.

[13] Karlson P. and Mansory Amir, *Educational Reforms in the Context of Globalization and in Afghanistan*, Stockholm: Institutional Education Stockholm University, 2004.

[14] Iheme E., *The Incubus: The Story of Public Enterprise in Nigeria*, 1997.

Privatisation, as a consequence of globalisation, influences the education sector to a great extent. Private education has largely been encouraged by and prevalent in many countries. Privately managed educational institutions emerge as a consequence of non-matching of supply and demand. Privatisation responds to diversified demands and adheres to individual choices. Self-financing private institutions with or without recognition may be termed as commercial private educational institutions. These commercial private higher educational institutions emerge from market forces and are linked to economic and global forces. Their programme and courses are market-driven and they decide on their own courses and subjects to offer. They are free to raise and deploy resources to meet their own norms. In the USA, for example, 30 to 40 percent is received from students and 60 to 70 percent of the recurring cost is generated from endowments, alumni, and other services.[16]

In India, though universities are state sponsored and established by the act of the Parliament, private universities have been flourishing. This is, however, permitted. These private universities have been driven and motivated by political chieftains. Though some of them are set up by linguistic, ethnic or religious groups and corporate entities, they too are based on the market principle. It may not be incorrect to say that vested interests too play a major role in this endeavour.

The government has, thus, initiated a negative contribution. While the input of private sectors has been encouraging in some areas of our mixed economy, it has not been encouraging in the education sector. The private aided colleges have failed to play a significant role in covering the financial burden of the government, as more than 95 percent of this recurring expenditure continues to be met by the public exchequer. On the other hand, pure or unaided colleges do provide financial relief to the government by providing higher education, but *at a huge and long-term economic and non-economic cost to the society*, and such institutions have been a recent phenomenon.

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[15] Starr P., *The Meaning of Privatisation* [online]: http://www. Paulstarr.com (1998).

[16] Ziderman A. and D. Albrecht, *Financing Universities in developing Countries*, The Stanford Services in Education and Public Policy. Washington, DC: The Falmer Press, 1995.

Admissions to students from the elite classes encourage private institutes to enjoy a certain status. Though, by definition, they are non-profitable, they charge donations and capitation fees not merely to cover their costs but also to make profits, which are not necessarily reinvested in education. The government needs to draw a distinct line in its want to encourage private initiative in higher education and not commercialisation.

Moreover, the quality they offer is also *questionable*. Referring to a recent verdict of the Supreme Court of India, which declared that *education* should not be a market commodity, it must be stated that the private educational institutions are violating the judgment of the apex court by their unpardonable practices. The paradox that exists is that, on the pretext of quality education, its commercialisation is seen in brighter light. Though National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has accredited many such institutions, sustaining their quality is a challenge. Despite the fact that re-accreditation process is on its way, there seems no real direction to control these institutions, at least, in maintaining and, if possible, further enhancing better standards after they have been given the status. The commencement of an institution leaves no scope for the "weeding out process."

The colleges encouraging capitation fee represent a case of completely owing *responsibility to the private sector.*[17] The growth of the private sector has led to many a discrepancy. Its tendency to encourage certain courses, especially professional courses, and promotion of the undeserving candidates has been de-motivating and demoralizing to the educational scenario. Taking all these factors into account, the claim of private educational institutions to be superior to state run institutions does not carry any weight.

Besides, they create a great divide of affordability primarily. Further it is alleged that public schools are less efficient than private ones. This is probably due to the fact that teachers in public schools are often paid better and cannot be easily fired unlike the private school recruits. They hire short-term or part-time teachers (*taxi teachers*), which reduce not only expenditure on wages but bring about better performance.[18] It can further be rightly argued that privatisation may lead to promotion of certain courses at the expense of other courses and its delivery mechanism – teaching, technology, etc., and promotion of a sophisticated society at the cost of meritorious but economically poor students. Is this ethically viable?

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[17] Tilak, "Capitation Fee Colleges," *Journal of Higher Education* 16, 1 (1992).

An ethical solution to this problem is a cost recovery process that implies reduction in subsidies in higher education. This can be done by diversifying the sources of funding. Shifting the incidence of the financial burden either to the beneficiaries (students) or to their users (employers) is another alternative. Student loans, graduate tax and enhancing fees[19] are other means. Student loan schemes have the advantage of recovering the loan from the same group of students for whom it is provided.

The graduate tax is an education specific tax levied on those who use educated man power. Increasing fee structure is another means. This justifiable case of increasing the fee to be levied on students of higher education whose ability to pay is higher than what they can, actually changes, as they belong to economically and socially better off families.

The Swaminathan[20] and Punnayya[21] committees recommend this approach. The recently levied 2% cess on taxes that is to be diverted to education is a welcome move in this direction. Thus, this trend of moving towards equity only benefits the already comfortable. Further, this creates an irreparable disparity among the different classes of people. An approach to target the poorer sections of the society through practical measures should be the prime focus of higher education in contemporary India.

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[18] Carnoy M. and McEwan P. J., "Privatisation through Vouchers in Developing Countries: The Cases of Chile and Columbia," in H. M. Levin ed., *Privatising Education: Can Marketplace Deliver, Efficiency, Equity and Social Cohesion?* Bouldwer: Westview Press, 2001.

[19] Wood Hall, Tilak and Varghese N. V. [online]: http://www.india-seminar.com/Report (New Delhi: UGC, 2000).

[20] AICTE, *Report of the High Power Committee for Mobilisation of Additional Resources for Technical Education* (D. Swaminathan Committee Report), New Delhi. All India council for Technical Education, 1994.

[21] University Grants Commission. *UGC Funding of Institutions of Higher Education* (Punnayya Committee), 1993.

7. IMPACT OF GATS AND CORPORATISATION ON EDUCATION

The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is all set to take over key services such as education, water and electricity and then charge them at a profit. This has major implications, especially in the developing world, where privatisation has already priced millions out of essential services. This agreement will, thus, set the ball rolling for private sectors to dominate the education system, especially the higher education. The critics with concern for ethical issues and who question this trend will face a blow.

Under GATS, students going abroad for study will see a tremendous increase. Education, cooperation and understanding among universities of different countries will set new international standards. As free flow of academia and educational linkage pose new challenges, curriculum and faculty composition tend to rise to new standards, as researches will percolate leading to an unhealthy impact.

Education as a constituent of GATS threatens the education system of nations like India. It will affect the societal structure in terms of its education affordability causing socio-cultural problems to a great extent. Indian universities will have to cope up with these standards or will be thrown out to the other side of the digital divide, raising debatable issues of whether it was a correct and ethical decision of being a signatory to GATS. Will Indian universities close down or cope up with new standards of competition? Will they open up new opportunities such as education being job-oriented? Will they work towards expanding their inbound education market and increase the quality of teaching, research and delivery mechanisms? These are desirable and ethically justified. In the context of Globalisation, privatisation and corporatisation, *will education soon be up for sale under GATS*? Only time will tell.

Corporatisation is a process of making a state body into an independent commercial company. Its protagonists consider it appropriate to corporatise providers that were formerly state owned. This may include energy, electricity, telecommunication and education. Corporatisation is often the first stage in the process of privatisation where the membership of a former state body is transferred to private individuals and institutional investors through the floating of shares available to the public and subsequent listing in a stock exchange.

Companies such as Shell or Exxon Mobil (ESSO) will soon dictate policies of schools and universities. Corporate involvement in higher education due to GATS will result in policies in favour of serving the needs of these corporations. Students' rights may be curbed to campaign against them.[22]

On the other hand, corporates of universities means that universities will function very similar to large business organizations. This underlines their capability of being run as a business house. For example, the case of Ford Motors that entered a partnership with Ohio State University on the assumption that the Missions of the University and the Corporations merged, is a classic one.

Corporatisation of education has a strong potential for commitment to excellence as in universities at Hong Kong, Oxford, Melbourne, and Montreal.[23] Excellence in universities under corporatisation is comprehensive and is not confined to academic pursuits only but extended to spheres of infrastructure, information access, housing, hostel facilities, health and even parking.

8. CONCLUSION

Thus, the above discussion highlights the issues raised and their subsequent consequences under the banner of globalisation, privatisation, GATS and corporatisation. Should the business of education under large multinationals be discouraged? Do they hold fast to values and ethics? Are they only profit making organizations refusing to adhere to needs of education? Let us justify our thoughts in the interest of the world at large. Progressive institutions like Christ College (Bangalore) have evolved models of resource management (human, physical, financial, etc.) to achieve both equity and quality.

As of today education management is growing at a faster pace along with professionalisation of education services. In the context of fast-changing environment, some of the changes being fundamental and others complex, there is a need to evolve and recognize such quality management model that will enable the institution to develop a competitive edge. Keeping elements of "traditional model" institutions can't move completely away from a provider-driven model to a consumer-driven form of higher education. Eliminating disciplines because they are currently not in (market) demand is contrary to the mission of any educational institution. Yet to some degree institutions must consider student preferences for applied education and the larger labour market. Consequently, to avoid such outcomes, institutions need to make major structural changes in their decision-making systems to allocate and reallocate and cross-subsidize resources to support both traditional model and consumer model in their "strategic management."

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[22] http://uk.indynudiu.org

[23] http://uk.indynudiu.org

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BUSINESS ETHICS: A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Paulachan Kochappilly[◆]

1. Introduction

Business booms. Business is everywhere and at every level of human relations and interactions. It flourishes or perishes; together with it human life is enhanced or eliminated depending on its face and force on human needs and deeds.

A renewed and increased momentum is seen in every sector, especially in the business sector with an ever-widening private global market economy, of course, in view of a greater acceptability and sustainability of the business kingdom. As a result, there is also an 'awakened' consciousness and a concomitant commitment in the overall progress and prosperity of all people in the business empire. This age of information technology and globalisation of economic enterprises with multinational companies has given due importance to a deeper understanding of the interconnectivity and the intricacies of business management and the urgency to address all issues of people at every stage and every step of business undertakings. Recently, the world of business has rightly started to take into account all sections of people and the otherwise unimportant but constituent element of market, that is, the mass population, which is the directly or indirectly affected or influenced sector in the empire.

Life is almost under the grip of a business mindset, including human and family ties. True, it is not totally new of the present era. In the past it was a practice, though it was mostly restricted to private domains. Today

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business controls every sphere of life. There is no taboo attached to the settlement of relationship on business terms. But, many a time, there is no code of conduct, except the legal set up, which to the chagrin of many does not function on bilateral or multilateral orientations, but tarnished on unilateral domination.

Business is always associated with economics. It is about managing the house, or putting the house in order. It has to look into all the different aspects of the house, that is, the world at large. The Common Minimum Programme (CMP) of the United Progressive Alliance given on May 27, 2004 in New Delhi (India)[1] outlines this concern at the very outset of the document. "The people of India have voted decisively in the fourteenth Lok Sabha elections for secular, progressive forces, for parties wedded to the welfare of farmers, agricultural labour, weavers, workers and weaker sections of society, for parties irrevocably committed to the daily well being of the common man across the country" (CMP). This statement reveals the truth of the much wanted attention in the management of India. This is an indicator to the framework in which the country has to concentrate, upon which the political future of any party relies. This reflects the voice and face of the Indian social and economic scenario needed to be addressed, which is overdue. There is a glimpse of a greater realisation of the flop in the economic reforms coupled with globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation in the same document, which had gained a wider coverage in the media. "The UPA reiterates its abiding commitment to economic reforms with a human face, which stimulates growth, investment and employment" (CMP). The message is loud and clear: economic reforms should be directed to enhance the human situation of all; they should wipe away the tears on the human faces, especially of the economically poor and marginalized; they should address the welfare of the whole population, not just a few privileged and economically well-off groups.

Here ethics is in focus. The Indian understanding of the term, *dharma*, the equivalent of ethics, explains this vividly and rightly. Literally, it means "that which holds together," or "that which upholds." Indeed, the task of ethics is to support and promote the well being of all people. When it comes to the issues related to business, there is need for a deeper, greater, wider and nobler understanding of the context and all people therein. In other words, business ethics should support and promote healthy, happy and holy transactions of all at every level. Only this can guarantee that business is ethical, that is, that which supports and promotes life in its fullness, wholeness and holiness.

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[1] "Common Minimum Programme of the United Progressive Alliance," in *Mainstream* 42 (June 5, 2004), 6-14.

2. Biblical Foundations

Trade and commerce, as they are part and parcel of social living, are recounted in the Bible as well. Business has to be seen in the Covenant context. It is the Covenant with Yahweh that sets and seals all good and right deeds. Therefore, Yahweh is the horizon for business. Yahweh is the solid and candid foundation for every business. Faithfulness, justice, loving kindness of Yahweh should reflect in every business deal in the covenant community.

Business is acceptable and laudable in the Bible. But it is important to measure things and people with the measure of Yahweh and as Yahweh would have judged it.

The practice of Sabbath and the year of jubilee is a typical example of Yahweh's way of looking at the business world. In fact, the celebration of the Sabbath establishes the proper and fitting attitude, approach and assimilation of the values involved in human business transactions. It sets the context for proper orientation and dedication in every relation, including that of varied business endeavours. As people bow before the 'Lord of all', the vision and mission of the people are well generated, organised and directed. Sabbath is the day to commemorate and celebrate the life of the community with the Lord of the Covenant. It is a day to walk in, with and for the Lord. This does not mean that other days of the week are not meant for such a healthy, holy and happy walk with the Lord. On the contrary, through the celebration of the Sabbath people are enlightened, enriched and enlivened with the covenantal vision and mission of the community and common good in order to extend and expand the experience of the Lord throughout the week. In other words, it is in the context of the celebration of Sabbath that the people retell, relive and renew the original and ideal relationship that should pervade and permeate the members of the community towards the realisation of the covenantal code of conduct.

The adoration of God in truth and spirit, the primary task of every Sabbath celebration, requires and enables people to act in tune with the divine design for the welfare of the world. In an act of true worship and praise, the Lord creates, liberates and directs His people to the Promised Land as a saved and saving community. Thus, the community makes the Lord present to all its members and its neighbours. In such a community truth, justice, righteousness and mercy of God reign supreme, and the laws and regulations will not be a burden but a blessing and ethics assumes its function in supporting and promoting the people to progress towards prosperity, liberty and beauty. God governs and guides everyone in this community, incorporating the least, the last and the lost, leading them to green pastures and fresh waters. In this sense, the celebration of Sabbath reviews, renews and reiterates the interconnectivity of each person with God and the entire creation.

If business world were to recognise, respect and respond to the inherent, inviolable and inevitable interconnections of this universe in its operations and transactions, it would definitely bring about prosperity to all people and give glory to God, which should be the dynamics of real business praxis. Moreover, business becomes a blessing, and the blessings of God are made visible, accessible and credible through business. The Sabbath, Sunday, or Jubilee celebrations should help people to appreciate and appropriate this integral and intimate vision of God for our society.

The celebration of jubilee also intents to help us better understand and appreciate the divine design in building up a prosperous society through our transactions or business endeavours in the world. Jubilee is instituted to create, liberate and direct people towards proper, promising and prosperous relationships, where God, people and land are recognised, respected and responded creatively and consciously. The jubilee celebration is to remember the covenant community; to reconcile with the Other, neighbour and nature, and to renew the spirit and truth of the covenantal commitment to the divine justice. The whole universe is said to rejoice during the jubilee celebration. Business transactions should, therefore, support and promote the all-round development of all the people in the world.

In other words, the Covenant of Yahweh proposes a proper distribution of the resources in the world. Ultimately, everyone is only a temporary custodian of wealth; the real owner is Yahweh. Its logical consequence is that whatever belongs to anyone belongs to Yahweh and whatever belongs to Yahweh belongs to every one of the people of God.

Besides these fundamental insights and instructions found in the Old Testament, there are a number of parables in the New Testament which speak about trading. The parable of the talents is a typical one. The manager entrusts money to his servants and goes for a trip. They traded with the money they received except one. All multiplied the amount. The one who received the least did not trade with it, but hid it beneath the earth. The parable speaks clearly and convincingly: "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest" (Matthew 24:26-27). It is important to trade with whatever we have. This is most important. Hence, trading is fundamental to human living.

There are also other parables in which Jesus portrays the relevance and significance of business in the world. The seventh commandment "You shall not steal," commands "justice and charity in the care of earthly goods and the fruits of men's neighbour. For the sake of the common goods, it requires respect for the universal destination of goods and respect for the right to private property. Christian life strives to order this world's goods to God and to fraternal charity."[2] Furthermore, the tenth commandment "You shall not covet your neighbour's goods" goes along with the seventh. Focusing on the seventh commandment, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches clearly: "In the beginning God entrusted the earth and its resources to the common stewardship of mankind to take care of them, master them by labour, and enjoy their fruits."[3] This stipulates twofold ethical foundations concerning the goods: "the right to private property" and "the universal destination of goods."[4] Earlier, *Gaudium et spes* had outlined this teaching: "In his use of things man should regard the external goods he legitimately owns not merely as exclusive to himself but common to others also, in the sense that they can benefit others as well as himself."[5] An ethical injunction is added: "Goods of production – material or immaterial – such as land, factories, practical or artistic skills, oblige their possessors to employ them in ways that will benefit the greatest number. Those who hold goods for use and consumption should use them with moderation, reserving the better part for guests, for the sick and the poor."[6] Evidently, this speaks about the disposition and attitude one should maintain in the field of business. One of the basic tenets of any business is echoed in the seventh commandment, "You shall not steal." The tenth commandment approves and safeguards the ownership of property and its use, "You shall not covet your neighbour's goods."

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[2] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994, 2401.

[3] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2402.

[4] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2403.

With the above biblical theological insights it is proper to examine a few aspects of business ethics as it is being practised today. In what follows, an examination on (i) Business as Basis, (ii) Business as Ethics, and (iii) Business in Crisis shall be undertaken.

3. Business as Basis

Business is the basis for social life. Business, one form or another, existed from the very beginning of human history. The fundamental action of every business – give and take – is found from the inception of life. The giving of love between the spouses paves the way for life. Today many tend to think that business involves a trick and, to an extent, deception, though it need not be the case always. Originally, business meant fulfilling – lending to someone what was lacking. That is, for the efficient management of the house, business, transfer of goods, is a must. It is a question of running the affairs of the house within the limits of material or monetary resources. There is the need for proper planning and consequent programme of action.

A. Business for Economy

More than ever before, money matters. To generate money business is inevitable. Economy is the management of the house. The house could be a family, a society, a state or the world affairs. To manage the house, attending to the various needs of the members of the community, depending on its size and shape, we need money or purchasing power. Studies in economics analyses the situations and proposes plans and procedures to cover the demands of the members of the community, obviously taking into account the resources available from within and without. In fact, there is no economy without business. In devising the proper means and methods, the economist should appropriate valid, candid, solid and, indeed, just ways to generate wealth and dispense it to the members.

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[5] Vatican II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* [*Gaudium et spes*], no. 69.

[6] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2405.

Business and economy should be directed to the welfare of all people in the society. The high ideals of India, *lokasangraha, sarvodaya* and *antyodaya* (welfare of the world, blossoming of all, wellbeing of the least and the last) should guide the steps of all involved in business. This will ensure the path of *shalom*, where everyone will glorify God, live peacefully on earth and on its goods and exchange hope to each other. Such an economy will open the vistas for economy of salvation, meaning rediscovering the fundamental oneness, wholeness and holiness of human beings in the Lord of all. An economy negligent of the integral, holistic and comprehensive view on the development of human being in the community loses sight of the total picture of human being.

Business is basic to economy: on the one hand, it promotes everyone in the community and, on the other, everyone supports the community. So also economy of all in the given community should be the basis for every business. In other words, business ethics looks into the details of every human transaction and guides every deed in view of a better, brighter and greater welfare of all, and especially the last, the least and the lost in the community.

B. Business for Ecology

Basically, business is operated on the basis of natural resources. It involves the natural material wealth of the community. Business is includes trade, transportation and transaction of the material goods, both visible and invisible. That is to say, business is in, for, and with the world. All our actions have some reactions. Whatever, wherever, whenever and whoever does has an effect on someone, something, somewhere and sometime. So, business, in fact, leads us to a web of relationships in the world. There is a delicate and yet decisive and often unnoticeable repercussion for every action and reaction.

Since business presupposes transactions, care should be given to recognise, respect and respond to the inherent intricate internal interconnections of somebody with everybody in the world. Business ethics, therefore, has to uphold the sensitive and significant interconnectedness of each being in the universe. Otherwise, in the haste we may make everything waste.

Business of all kinds should try to make the truth, goodness and beauty of the universe shine forth. Unfortunately, business devoid of ethical vision exploits natural resources for the advantage of a few, giving rise to an ever widening gulf between the haves and have-nots. The blind and mindless use and misuse of the environment and everything in it leave the world a wasteland. Hence, the ideals of *satyam*, *sivam*, *sundaram* (truth, goodness, and beauty) of all should be the guiding light on our footsteps in any business undertaking. This is possible for those who possess an ethical perspective on business – an ethics of tilling and keeping the earth and earning the livelihood and making them available to the needy.

C. Business for Employee

Business generates jobs. Government and other agencies attract people to huge capital investments in industrial sector to create more jobs and to accelerate economic growth. Multinational companies are on the run to find new and better pastures where they can avail cheaper labour and access larger markets to sell their products and amass exorbitant profits. True, business depends on its employees. It is the labour and people who work that keep the business going. Indeed, on the one hand, it is the employees who generate wealth for the society and, on the other, business generates wealth for employees. That is, a mutual enhancement is basically part of the business hub.

Business that forgets or neglects the employees cannot flourish, if not perish. At the same time, employees also should think that they would be jobless and penniless, if business does not prosper. This is to say that business depends on the true, good, just relationship between the employer and the employee. Unhealthy, unnecessary and unwanted strikes from the part of the labourers and unjust, inhuman and unwarranted interference on the part of the managers or owners will, naturally, harm or hinder business and economic growth.

Business ethics, hence, stipulates the terms and conditions for a healthy, happy and holy conduct between the employer and the employee. Both employers and employees have rights and duties. These are not aimed at domination or subordination of anyone but intend the co-ordination of all. They should co-operate and collaborate in the business enterprises so that they can make real progress which, in turn, will be the greatest asset of the community.

4. Business as Ethics

Ethics supports and promotes human beings in attaining their goal in life. It explores and examines human thought, word and action in reference to moral laws and norms. In the light of the fundamental values and norms ethics puts forward criteria for human actions that pertain to morally right or wrong, good or evil. Ethics, thus, upholds and unfolds the way of conducting a holistic, full and holy life. Business also supports and promotes human life. It makes human life sustainable and comfortable. Through business people have access to human and natural resources that enhance human life. In this sense business and ethics share the common ground in order to enlighten, enrich and enliven humanity as a whole. In other words, ethics and business support and promote the celebration of human life. Hence, business should be ethical and ethics, in turn, should promote celebration of life.

In business ethics, three important constituent components could be delineated, namely, people, place and property. All the three are well knit within a web of relationships, certainly characterised by economic realities. It amounts to saying that business enters into many important aspects of life. As a result, business should be carried out according to the norms of ethics. The important distinguishing feature of business activity "is its *economic* character. In the world of business, we interact with each other not as family members, friends, or neighbours but as buyers and sellers, employers and employees, and the like."[7] Therefore, ethics of business "is at least in part the ethics of economic relations – such as those involving buyers and sellers and employers and employees." Accordingly, there could be "three points of view from which decisions in business can be made: the economic, the legal, and the moral."[8] Boatright continues saying that "these points of view may be integrated to form an approach to business decision making that can aid people facing difficult ethical situations." According to him, the moral point of view has two important features: rational and impartial:

> First is a willingness to seek out and act on *reasons*... Moral rules should not be accepted merely because they are a part of the prevailing morality. Rather, we should attempt to justify the rules we act on by means of the most general and comprehensive kind of reasons available... Second, the moral point of view requires us to be *impartial*. We must regard the interests of everyone, including ourselves, as equally worthy of consideration and give all interests equal weight in deciding what to do.[9]

The integrated approach, as Boatright advocates, should involve an integration of all three points of view: the economic, the legal, and the moral. In the light of the integrated approach, the outcome should be "a decision that is ethically defensible while at the same time satisfying the legitimate demands of economic performance and a company's legal obligations."[10] Such a business approach definitely supports and promotes the life of the members of a society. In this sense, business serves the purpose of ethics and thereby business transactions become ethical.

If the production, transportation, transaction and distribution of goods empower people to celebrate their lives in the context of the community in reference to God and in a healthy relationship with the world, the business is ethical. Originally, business was taken for such a celebration. That is, when people thought of celebrating life, they did not possess everything they desired. However, when people decided to share with others what they had, all had to their fill. This is found among ideal charismatic communities, including the early Christian fellowship as described in the Acts of the Apostles. It was for a greater celebration people went for marketing and business. This is still a practice in many communities. This original vision of business – understood as a celebration of life – encloses also the ideal, for every step and stage in business should lead all people to fullness, wholeness and holiness of life. Business, understood from this perspective, will be highly economic, legal and moral. Such business enterprises will be truly and fully creative, liberating and rejoicing. Business transactions will pave the way for a total transformation of the people, place and property.

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[7] John R. Boatright, *Ethics and the Conduct of Business* (Delhi: Pearson Education, Indian Reprint, 2003), 5.

[8] Boatright, *Ethics and the Conduct of Business*, 7.

[9] Boatright, *Ethics and the Conduct of Business*, 9.

[10] Boatright, *Ethics and the Conduct of Business*, 9.

Moreover, business is a celebration. In India, business used to be held in the context of local, regional, religious, and national festivities. These celebrations – *mela* and *bazzar* – are held regularly, that is, they may be held weekly, monthly or annually. It should be a celebration. So also in every celebration, there is a business. In every business there is a celebration. But every business need not be a celebration for all those associated with it. Business, to be ethical, should be a celebration of all in the business empire, from top to bottom, from the first to the last, and from the great to the least. Business as ethics is a celebration of earth, wealth and health of all people of every place, but beginning with the local and marching towards the global, always maintaining harmony among the economic, legal and moral aspects concerning proprietor, labourer and customer.

A. Business for Prosperity

Business seen as ethics works for prosperity. There is no other incentive for business, except the welfare of all. The goal of business should be *lokasamgaraha, sarvodaya* and *antyodaya* (welfare of the world, blossoming of all, wellbeing of the least and the last). In the biblical perspective, business should be for the establishment of *shalom* – a full flowering of all. In fact, it is a gift from God. So also it is a promise, a promise of Yahweh consisting of land, people and presence.

Human beings are commissioned to till the land and keep it beautiful. So, hard work is considered to be a trait mastered by human beings. There is no question of negativity or passivity. Women and men are called to work in the garden of God and bring forth abundance of fruits. It means that they have to commit themselves for the beauty, quality and plenty in the world. 'The promised land' is a beautiful imagery used to paint that prosperity envisaged in the Bible. Along with the work on the ground, there is the need to live with neighbours freely, friendly and joyfully. Work and the consequent affluence add to the prosperity. It calls forth a life in harmony with fellow human beings. Besides, there is the need for living in the presence of Yahweh. In the presence of Yahweh human beings recover their dignity and destiny. In the absence of Yahweh, proper motivation and orientation for life is diminished or dismissed.

The first verse of *Iśa Upaniṣad* beautifully depicts all these three realms of human relationship in order to maintain a world of prosperity, harmony and joy. Here the mystic poet describes the need to experience the pervading and permeating presence of the Lord. On account of the presence of the Lord, people are asked to enjoy the goods of the earth with a sense of detachment. It instructs the faithful not to covet the wealth of anyone. As business is meant for the prosperity of the world, even the liturgical prayers abundantly emphasize it: "For a temperate climate, for a good harvest and an abundance of fruits, and for the prosperity of the whole world, we beseech you."[11] Every activity, including that of business, should be geared up to the prosperity of the world – a new earth and a new heaven.

B. Business with Propriety

Propriety is essential for business. In every sphere of business there must be decorum in the demands, decisions and dealings. Today, more than ever before, people in every walk of life expect decency in behaviour. Moreover, business to be successful, right and correct decision-making and a definitive plan of action are of paramount importance.

The most important and oft-neglected aspect of business is doing justice. To give one's due is kernel and basic minimum for the flourishing of any business undertaking. Justice should be meted out in every direction and to all. This will ensure the teamwork and the sense of belonging, which are crucial to the development and establishment of any business. The public also have to be taken into consideration and nothing shall go against the common good of the society. A healthy society is, indeed, a prerequisite for a prosperous business. Therefore, anything that hinders the steady development from any quarter is not ethical.

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[11] *The Syro-Malabar Qurbana: The Order of Raza* (Ernakulam: Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference, 1989), 22.

C. Business of Charity

This is yet another sphere of business. It is not enough to do justice, but need to go beyond it. Moved by compassion, business world has to concentrate on charity as well. In order to uplift the unfortunate in the community, special attention should be paid to the oppressed, suppressed and marginalised. There are poor people in every society. Business committed to the welfare of the people cannot but help people in need.

These days major business companies devote considerable percentage of their income to improve the socio-economic condition of the underprivileged in the society. It is, indeed, a welcome sign. Of course, more could be done in this direction. Without the government pressure, companies should be doing charity for the all round welfare of the society.

Doing charity should be considered as the hallmark of human dignity. Moreover, doing charity is not a luxury but a duty, since basically business is to promote human well being. The growing disparity between the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots, the skyscrapers and the slums, is a counter sign and anti-witness of our business establishments.

5. Business in Crisis

Business is in crisis when it focuses only on someone at the expense of others. There is an increasing tendency in the direction of excess exploitation and exclusion of the economically less privileged and marginalised. The traits of such a crisis include: profit, market and debt.

A. Profiting as the Criterion

In the developing market economy, trade activity is guided and governed by the profit incentive. Everything in business is set for profit. Business thrives on profit. As such there is nothing wrong about profit motive. But profit of somebody should not be at the expense of others. There is a cutthroat competition in the field. Any foul play to gain name and fame for one's own company is not only tolerated but many at times promoted. In this race for profit, many a time, the relational aspect of human beings is overlooked. The personal and societal dimensions of business are not given due attention. As a result, the so-called economic progress made by individuals and firms uproot the persons from family and society.

Profit in itself is good. There is nothing wrong about profit making. The problem arises when business is held only for a personal profit and devoid of any social bearing. Business lands up in crisis as its activities are geared up to amass undue profit by any means, without paying necessary attention to the other constitutive components of business enterprises.

In the highly competitive field of business management, very often the might becomes right. Today one who makes a higher bid wins the race. In such a scenario the international and multinational companies buy anyone and anything on the basis of their money power. As a consequence, all other competitors in the field are either purchased or dismissed by deceit or threat. The public is bluffed, for the companies make attractive offers in the beginning and as the other competitors are removed from the scene, they will have monopolised the market and fix prices. By the time, the public has no choice, but to go for what the multinationals offer at their whims and fancies.

B. Marketing as the Norm

In the age of marketisation, everything is being marketed. Things have value to the extent it has a demand in the market. The inherent value and worth of people and things are at stake. The trade of talents and skills of people tends to be a modern colonisation and slavery.

Another important trend of the business world is that it makes or breaks the market as well. It is through huge investments on commercial advertisements that the business empire sells its products for exorbitant prices. Though we are unaware of the strategies of the global market and the media, a subtle erosion of human values and moral principles continues to take place.

In the process of globalisation, market became all the more prominent and dominant. There is a rapid growth in the international market. The rural, the regional and the national markets are giving way to global market. Market is for business, and it is a big *bazaar* today. There is big business as well.

It seems that everything is made for the market and marketing is the chief activity of the business concerns. It is true that everything in the market undergoes a mandatory quality check. Yet, a pertinent question remains to be asked: What and whose needs do these goods in the market fulfil? Or, are they meant only to fuel the greed? In fact, the market produces items and succeeds in selling them. The modern market exploits the greed of human beings than it meets their needs. It creates an artificial need in man and gets her or him to go for the desired item. People get addicted to the market. They follow it blindly. Besides, the glittering advertisements make people believe what the market wants to say and sell. Often marketing does not take into consideration the health, happiness and holiness of the people.

C. Growing National Debts

Many nations are in huge international debts. It has reached such disproportionate and grotesque proportions that no nation can afford to pay them back. The sad thing about these debts is that it is the result of exploitative and unjust business deals. Some of the nations are bankrupt due to their huge spending on arms and ammunitions. Militarily powerful nations offer their service to the nations that are at war with each other. At the end of the war, there is a huge debt incurred by the nation which had sought military assistance. Who wins? Who looses? It is an ambiguous situation, and it is extremely difficult to discern and decide. However, it is obvious that these unjust business deals lead to the depletion of natural resources and plundering of the economy. Such is the outcome of the war, which is the after-effect of a business deal. Furthermore, the foreign military forces make their bases under the pretext of safeguarding and enhancing the peace process in that country. This is yet another business deal, from which not many nations can opt out, especially in the context of the internationally declared and, many a time, selfishly-motivated *unjust* Campaign on Terrorism headed by the US and UK.

When the war is over, there is the need of reconstruction of cities, bridges, roads, etc., and the multinational companies make their presence felt through their bid for power and money. This is also part of the business deal. In the end, the nation that was crippled due to the short-term or prolonged war spends huge sum to build up the nation and its people. It is part of the game – break down in order to build up – a single business package.

In former days nations waged war and expanded their territory and colonised. Today, the mighty with money and business continues to do the same, but in disguise. They do colonise nations and enslave the mindset of people under the pretext of big business and global market economy.

Business ethics squarely addresses the issue of domination and admonishes those powers whose military or monetary interventions to assist a nation should not push that nation and people into bankruptcy. If help is sought from outside, they may give timely help to contain the conflicts and divisions, but should not continue their presence indefinitely to erode the wealth, health, and peace of that nation.

If such business is true in the field of war and the war-torn nation, it is also true in other areas of business, where the mighty manipulates to grab power and rob the wealth of a people. In the case of this latter, the process of business is enslavement.

6. Conclusion

Business, seen from the perspective of praxis, is to protect, preserve and promote economy, ecology and employee. In the original and ideal perspective, business is ethics in the sense it supports and promotes people to have life in fullness, wholeness and holiness. As business proposes a prosperous people on the ground of propriety and charity, it really holds people together and guides them to their true destiny. An evaluation of the business enterprises of our times, signals a crisis in the empire, as long as the trends of profiteering dominates as the primary criterion, and growing debts threaten the poor nations.

Business is fundamental to the full flowering of the community. It is pivotal to the health, wealth and happiness of a society. The ethical standard of the community depends on the nature and character of business policies and strategies.

There is an imminent threat in the wake of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation of the market. What is urgent is to reconcile the rural and the global market towards a sustainable trade, transportation, transaction of goods and transformation of people to a full, whole and holy life. Business is a blessing. It can be a burden as well. Indeed, business is to diminish and dismiss the burden of people and make the blessings – land, people and the presence of the Lord – visible, accessible and credible. Business turns out to be a blessing when it is done in reverence to the Land, in reference to the fellow beings and in the presence of the Lord.

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THE SCANDALOUS FALL OF ENRON

A Call for Ethical Re-positioning in Business

Toji Puthenkaduppil◆

1. Introduction

Business is an art as well as a science. As an art it needs deep concentration and dedication. Its scientific nature demands logic and orderliness. Healthy synthesis of these factors in a harmonious way is very essential for the success of any business. The example of Enron, however, projects a reverse order, that is, it tends to showcase how malpractices can create an apparent boom in business and veil it with fabricated excellence. Such tendencies produce only short-lived bubbles of prestige in business and in society. They are actually deviations from the right track. In such a context, I suggest an ethical re-positioning in business, that is, we have to re-assert the values which enhance business and the well being of society. The relevance of this re-assertion of values is explained here with the example of the scandalous fall of Enron. Though its fall took place a couple of years ago, its ethical implications are still significant for analyses.

2. Fabricated Excellence and Collapse of Enron

Enron was one of the prestigious power corporations in the US. The global energy market was highly influenced by Enron because they explored the possibilities of energy trade and was regarded as a market leader.[1] The name and fame of Enron did not last long because of various reasons. According to Nick Beams, "the primary cause of Enron's risky behaviour was the growing arrogance of its executives who became confident that no

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[1] Beams, "The Enron Collapse and the Crisis of the Profit System" [Online]: http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/jan2002/enro-j29.shtml

one was looking over their shoulders, watching and understanding what they were doing."[2] The fall of Enron is not only a fall of a company but also fall of a system. The auditors, Arthur Andersen Group, torpedoed the system of accounting through illicit entry of accounts. It is said that to shoot up the profit of the corporation, at the instructions of its executives, they entered the revenue expenditures, instead of entering them in profit and loss accounts, into the balance sheet and showed as capital expenditure. As a result the exaggerated profit of Enron seduced the shareholders and other stakeholders, and people madly owned the shares of Enron as a sign of cachet in society.[3]

Reality, however, was too far from this manipulated business boom. According to Christy Sanders,

> In a successful attempt to hide their large debts, the company established a series of limited partnerships, which could be treated as separate entities. These accounting tricks had the desired effect of showing the company's profit to be much higher than they actually were, pushing up stock prices, deceiving investors and lying to Enron's own employees, encouraging them to sink their savings and retirement funds into company stock. The company itself made payments to these pension funds in stock rather than cash.[4]

The investigation reports prepared following the fall of Enron were somewhat glossy. Andrew S. Fastow, company's Chief Financial Officer (CFO), was the driving force behind the adoption of the foul accounting decision. The company was transformed into a partnership firm of four persons and the CFO became one among the partners. According to Kurt Eichenwald, "these four entities were purportedly established to give Enron the ability to hedge certain of its investments; under the concept, as the value of the investments went down, the values of the Raports (a quartet of partnership) would go up, and vice versa."[5] Ideally, the CFO could not become a partner of the same firm because he was bound to protect the rights and privileges of shareholders and other stakeholders without any partiality. Here this principle was violated. As a partner, the CFO longed for the share of profit and failed to faithfully execute the service which he ought to have performed.

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[2] Beams, "The Enron Collapse and the Crisis" [Online].

[3] Shareholders are the people who contribute to the capital of the company at different times and receive a portion of ownership in the form of shares in accordance with their contributions. Stakeholders are the people who are closely related to business either as shareholders or as the people who are necessary for the success of business in different forms. Employees, government, industry, consumers, international community, etc., are some of the examples of stakeholders.

[4] Sanders, "Enron Collapse Exposes Extensive Corruption and a Massive Political Scandal" [Online]: http://www.moles.org/project underground/drillbis/7_10/3.html

While concealing its debt from others, Enron had projected a false graph of profit to shareholders and other stakeholders.[6] Andersen, the auditors, earned more from Enron for non-audit services ($72 m) than it did for auditing ($25 m).[7] Enron's internal audit committees (a subset of their board) failed to police their auditors properly.[8] In short, the accounting manipulations gave the message to the general public that the company was growing fast and as a result its share value went up. When this foul play was noticed the company fell down from the top, resulting in an economic crisis in the US economy for a short period of time. The US government was also not an innocent victim of the malpractices of Enron. Government officials also played their part with vested interests.

3. The Role of Government in the Fall of Enron

It is quite unfortunate to note the role of a government, unduly supporting and safeguarding the malpractices of a business organization. Financial experts have opined that Enron's fall started from the former US President Bill Clinton's administration itself. Clinton had a soft corner towards Enron and its business. Charles R. Smith noted that "in 1992, Enron donated $100,000 to Clinton's inauguration, and Enron's top executive Ken Lay stayed at the White House 11 times."[9] Further, according to Smith, Clinton government rendered many favours to Enron officially, including contacting foreign countries for Enron. The executives of Enron travelled with the US officials all over the world, especially through Russia, India, Indonesia and China, for business campaign. By exploiting the political influence the US authorities, for example, forced Indonesia to sign business contracts with Enron. East Java Power Project was one of such deals.[10] The documents show that the Clinton administration knew about the deals which were also filled with kickbacks for Indonesian President Suharto.[11]

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[5] Eichenwald, "Andersen Trial Yields Evidences in Enron's Fall" [Online]: http://www.money.cnn.com2002/06/17/news/companies/andersen _followup/ index.com

[6] "The Ship That Sank Quietly" *The Economist*, February 16-22, 2002, 56.

[7] "When the Numbers Don't Add Up," *The Economist*, February 9-15, 2002, 61.

[8] "When the Numbers Don't Add Up," 62.

[9] Smith, "The Real Enron Scandal" [Online]: http://www.newsmax.com/archives/ articles/2001/1/28/155951.shtml

It is believed that the US government knew the corrupted behaviour of Enron but did nothing to prevent it because of political and monetary gains. Ideally, a government must act as the watchdog of the wellbeing of the society but here the Clinton administration miserably failed to fulfil its obligations. Smith has noted that Enron collected a good amount of money from Exim, Export-Import, Bank and the US Department of Transportation through a corrupt manner by using their influence in government. Their political influence motivated them to behave in such way and it fuelled the company to cheat the general public without any pricks of conscience. Charles R. Smith notes:

> Documents obtained from the Clinton administration are filled with direct quotes and hard numbers detailing taxpayer money that were paid as illegal bribes to a corrupt regime. The citizens of Indonesia and the United States were the victims of a massive crime. That crime has received no press attention and no investigation.[12]

It is not befitting to blame Clinton administration alone for the corruption and fall of Enron. George W. Bush is also responsible for its fall. Christy Sanders reveals Bush's contact with Enron and for that the author quotes Centre for Public Integrity and says: "… George W. Bush had received a total of US$ 774,100 in campaign funds from Enron management (including US$ 312,500 for gubernatorial campaigns), making this company the single largest patron of his political career."[13]

It is said that Enron had played a vital role in the formulation of government's power policy. The power policy was drafted by a task force and Enron had made a discussion with this group. It is said that the final draft of the policy was formulated in accordance with the interests of Enron. After the crisis came to public notice, the General Accounting Office (GAO) conducted an enquiry on the influence of Enron over the formulation of the power policy. GAO had asked for the report of the task force from the US Vice-President Dick Cheney, and to investigate the malpractices which took place in it. The Report blames that even after nine months Cheney did not present it before GAO. Instead, he justified his deed by saying that the President and Vice-President can solicit advice from anybody they want in confidence. Christy Sanders reports on this situation:

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[10] Smith, "The Real Enron Scandal" [Online].

[11] Smith, "The Real Enron Scandal" [Online].

[12] Smith, "The Real Enron Scandal" [Online].

[13] Sanders, "Enron Collapse Exposes Extensive Corruption" [Online].

> It is known that Enron had six meetings with the Task Force, and that Kenneth Lay was given a private meeting with Cheney one month before the final policy was released. Democrats, environmental and human rights groups, and concerned citizens are now asking how much influence Enron was given in the formulation of the policy and why such a task force did not allow equal participation by other interest groups.[14]

The GAO announced on January 30, 2002 that it would file an unprecedented suit against the White House to get the information it has requested.[15] These incidents clearly show the role of the US government in the corruption of Enron. It is said that majority of the senators and congress members, serving on the committees set up to investigate the issues related to the Enron demise received campaign contributions either from Enron or from Arthur Andersen.[16] These factors are not healthy in any society and in business. The need of business ethics comes here and one has to follow the basic codes and norms of it to ensure a bright future; otherwise, 'Enrons' would be repeated.

4. The Immediate Effects of the Fall

The fall of Enron can be seen as a heavy blow on the shareholders and other stakeholders because they were forced to bear the brunt of this scandalous treachery. In fact, the fall of Enron heavily damaged the boomed aspirations of shareholders and other stakeholders. Enron was created in 1985 and from the starting point onwards it had a swift growth and many wondered at its advancements and influences in the field of energy.

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[14] Sanders, "Enron Collapse Exposes Extensive Corruption" [Online].

[15] Sanders, "Enron Collapse Exposes Extensive Corruption" [Online].

[16] Sanders, "Enron Collapse Exposes Extensive Corruption" [Online].

Initially, the share value peaked at US$ 90 per share and many longed for it as a mark of power and prestige. When the malpractices were detected by the end of 2001, the share value slumped just to US$ 5 per share.[17] Those who had invested their savings in the shares of Enron miserably collapsed with Enron. Employees lost their jobs and retirement benefits which were in the form of company's stock. They were also misled by their own employers and it expedited the intensity of their disappointment.[18] Though the government fed Enron with undue influences, the fall unravelled all sorts of their illicit relationship to the general public. The government was supposed to be the watchdog of the well being of society but, unfortunately, it operated under the clutches of multinational business giants. This was really an unfortunate phenomenon. In the broader sense it caused even existential crisis and a kind of distrust among people. It heavily damaged other industries of the same category. According to W. J. Billy Tauzin, "the stock values of companies involved in energy trading, and in the construction of independent power plants, have fallen significantly in the wake of the Enron bankruptcy."[19]

The fall of share value indicates that such companies lost their credibility, as Enron has set a bad example before them. The fall adversely affected the consumers also because all on a sudden, as suppliers of various services disappeared from market without prior notification. The regularity of their operations broke down and the concerned businesses were frozen for a short period of time. Tangible and intangible losses steeped up and took a lot of time for recovery. International community also was shocked with the fall of Enron because the latter had a world wide web of business and those business mansions disappeared from the scene with heavy damages to its stakeholders. Effects which fell upon them are almost the same when compared to other industries, but the intensity varies in accordance with the involvement of both parties in business. In brief, the consequences of the fall of Enron are regrettable and indicate that we need credibility and sustainability in business.

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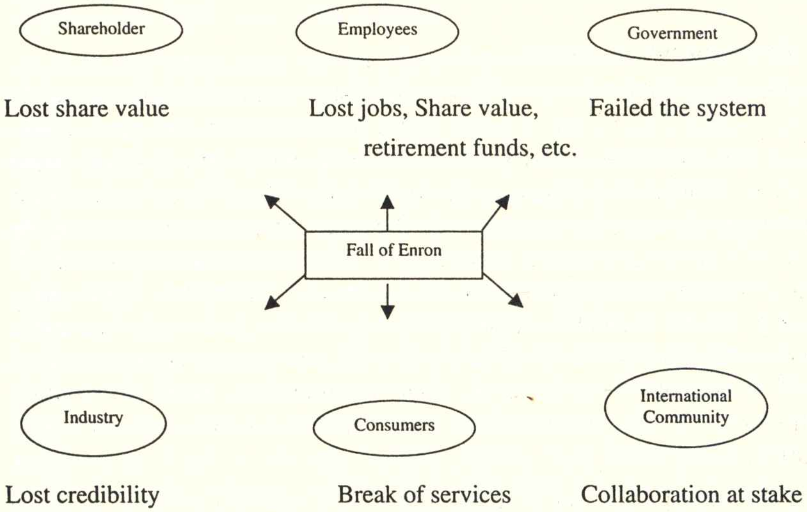
[17] Sanders, "Enron Collapse Exposes Extensive Corruption" [Online].

[18] Jeffrey Gordon, "What Enron Mean for the Management and Control of the Modern Business Corporation: Some Initial Reflections," *Theories of Corporate Governance: The Philosophical Foundations of Corporate Governance*, ed. Thomas Clarke, 322-332, New York: Routledge, 2004, 328-30.

[19] Tauzin, "The Effect of the Bankruptcy of Enron on the Functioning of Energy Markets" [Online]: http://www.energycommerce.whitehouse.gov/107/hearings/0213200hearing487/the-honorable_joe-Bartonprint.com


Shareholder
Employees
Government
Lost share value
Lost jobs, Share value, retirement funds, etc.
Failed the system
Fall of Enron
Industry
Consumers
International Community
Lost credibility
Break of services
Collaboration at stake

Effects of the Fall of Enron Upon Shareholders and Other Stakeholders

5. Significance of Ethical Re-positioning in Business

The fall of Enron was really unfortunate but at the same time it shed light on the loopholes of the present accounting system in the US. Earlier, Harshad Mehta, an Indian Share-broker, did commit malpractices in Indian share market and had unravelled the possibilities of foul play in this field. Both these instances alerted the authorities and were forced to tighten the rules and regulations with regard to it. What we need is creative exposition of possibilities with maximum output. The greedy rise of Enron has really shaken the ethical world and communicated a bad example which is veiled under the principle of excellence. Such practices would certainly influence other companies in many respects and as a result they may follow the same pseudo-principles in order to flourish in business. Such tendencies, however, may harm shareholders' and other stakeholders' interests with heavy blows as Enron did. In other words, here the most fundamental principle of ethics, that is, justice is at stake. So, an ethical re-positioning becomes an inevitable and a significant need.

5.1. Refined Notion of Justice

It is interesting to note the analysis of justice and its applications in business, especially in connection with the fall of Enron. Scholars define justice in different ways. *The Republic*, the celebrated work of Plato, gives the message that justice is giving the due of the other.[20] Aristotle, in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, places justice as the greatest of all virtues and for him justice is to be distributed according to the worth of the individuals.[21] Thomas Aquinas defines justice in his famous work *Summa Theologiae*. For him, justice is the habit whereby a person with a lasting and constant will renders to each his/her due.[22] John Rawls, placing justice on top of all virtues,[23] speaks of its two aspects. These include, first, equal distribution of rights and duties of individual and, second, social and economic inequalities as well.

At the initial situation of moral life all are situated at equal position because nobody will be less or more advantageous over the other. From this ideal ground human beings choose the principle of justice. Once people step into it, each one can advance himself/herself according to his/her talents. Social and economic inequalities would result in society according to the growth and it is inevitable for the advancement of society. Rawls would say that such advancement has to uphold the least advantaged in society so that the wellbeing of the community will be maintained appropriately.[24] Today, however, most of the people are not bothered about the least privileged and do practically nothing for their advancement in society. The executives of Enron even did not care for its shareholders and other stakeholders. Moreover, Enron doctored amazing profits at the cost of shareholders and other stakeholders.[25] Rawlsian ethics does not consider a person and his/her activities as a single unit. It holds that one can personally excel without considering the ethics of his activities, but it may lead to a total collapse. Rawlsian notion, therefore, is also not a foolproof principle of justice.

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[20] Plato, *The Republic*, I.333-354, ed., G. R. F. Ferrari and trans. Tom Griffith, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

[21] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, V.1131a22, trans. David Ross, New York: Oxford University Press, 1925, reprint edition 1984.

[22] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae.58.1, trans. Thomas Gilby, Cambridge: Blackfriars, 1975.

[23] Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harward University Press, 1971, 3.

So Justice, in fact, is more than these definitions. The refined notion of justice which I propose is: justice ought to embrace the other in his/her totality to pave the way for his/her integral and balanced establishment with empirical and transcendental orientations. Justice is not just a habit or giving the due of the other or distributing anything according to the worth of individuals. In the strict sense, I think, these notions of justice guarantee only the rights of individuals. The primacy of justice among the virtues is universally accepted.[26] The refined notion of justice would hold that the other must be taken in his/her totality. Then, his/her empirical as well as transcendental nature is to be acknowledged well and by footing on this ground we have to pave the way for his/her integral and balanced establishment so that he/she too can do the same to the other without any reservation. That is, though human person is a finite being he/she can move towards infinite possibilities, and this intertwining nature keeps him/her at the peak of ethical web of beings as the ambassador of the ultimate norm designer. Here, especially, rational beings would get a prominent place among other beings with the mission of implementing the above principle of justice in its full sense. As a result the standard of the society will go up and social wellbeing will become a concrete reality. The principles of the refined notion of justice have to be operational among all as a single unit for their fruitful functioning in the life of individuals and society.

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[24] Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 15.

[25] Gordon, "What Enron Means for the Management," 326.

[26] Here, in this refined notion of justice, I am indebted to both Aristotle and John Rawls.

6. Raising Standards in Business and Ethical Re-positioning

A wise man is a person who learns good lessons from the past and implements it in the present for a prosperous future. The scandalous fall of Enron shook the ethical world and as a result ethical principles were tightened with the view to block such catastrophes which may shrink the sustainability of business. Business has to be built upon the principle of justice. Justice has got a wider meaning, and its perspectives encompass the human person and his/her activities in their totality so that the implied meanings would become more realistic through his/her concrete acts of convictions. In the beginning he/she grounds in the actual situation and then starts his/her journey towards unlimited possibilities in order to explore greater heights for the benefit of his/her fellow human beings. While analyzing the problems connected to the case of Enron, one finds that they started from the ground realities and expanded their wings towards the horizons of innumerable possibilities. Till this stage they were on the right track. During their journey towards the peak of business expansion deviation from the right track took place and they misused the opportunities which were present for the nourishment of business as well as the wellbeing of society. Here started their ethical decline and had gradually lost their grip to crumble down miserably. These instances demand an ethical re-positioning in business.

Ethical re-positioning means a shifting from the existing ethical principles, which are proved inefficacious to ensure the wellbeing of individual and society, and to embrace the principle/principles which enhance individual as well as social wellbeing at different circumstances. Here I propose an ethical re-positioning because none of the existing ethical principles safeguards the interests of shareholders and other stakeholders. The refined notion of justice seems to serve the purpose. The three principles, which constitute the refined notion of justice, would envelop both individual and his/her overall activities.

The first principle, embracing the other in his/her totality includes the person and his/her activities. Personal ethical choices and ethical choices of his/her activities (e.g., Business) are involved here. Both these things are to be considered as a single unit in the realm of ethics. Here one can avoid ethical clashes because he/she is not looking for an ethics for particular activities. All his/her activities are taken synchronically in his/her moral behaviour. For example, when a person enters software market, first of all he/she should be a trustworthy person; otherwise people will not initiate a contract with him/her. Secondly, the business must also contain truthfulness and fidelity and it would lead to real success. Ethical relativism will not work here, that is, an ethics for personal life and another for business. A human person is a complex being and all his/her activities are intertwined and no watertight compartmentalized operation is possible. If such things happen, then, people would brand it as duplicity in behaviour or multiple personality, and declare him/her unworthy to collaborate.

Second, this principle would pave the way for his/her integral and balanced establishment. This is the outflow of the first principle because the person and the activities operate as a single unit and if they are on the right track, naturally they would proceed to integral and balanced establishment. Here the person strives for a single goal and he/she concentrates all his/her energy to realize this goal. Such integral operations set good models in society.

Third, empirical and transcendental orientations must be considered gently because a sense of satisfaction needs material and immaterial elements. Human person is material and spiritual at the same time and so also his activities. For example, any business needs profit and sustainability for its success. For this the values such as truthfulness, fidelity, etc., have to collaborate with justice. These three principles are not three isolated entities rather one operating principle in the case of individual and of his/her activities.

The executives of Enron failed in their moral behaviour, because they separated ethics of individual and business as two distinct entities. At the initial stage the executives tried to project prosperity but they could not succeed in it. Individual and business had their own goals and the officials of Enron did nothing to integrate them for the sustainability of business. Ideally, the governing body of the business is supposed to enhance the interests of shareholders and other stakeholders. But it is not taking place properly in present day's diverse contexts. So, we go for new equations in ethics. This is the reason why I suggest an ethical re-positioning in business, which may ensure the harmonious existence of humankind.

7. Conclusion

The history of world business has recorded diverse sorts of examples and their after effects, for the future analysis of the existing as well as forthcoming business persons. History of the rise and fall of Enron sheds light upon the craze of executives who longed only for profit and their conscious ignorance of the welfare of shareholders and other stakeholders. In other words, Enron unveils the facts of deviation from the right track of ethical behaviour. This is not an isolated incident; many follow the same track for the realization of selfish motives. So, to have the ethical rhythm of society maintained we have to initiate an ethical re-positioning, that is, upholding the principle of justice and other good values. It would furnish the society with ideals for a bright future. We have to cater to these ideals among our fellow members of society for cultivating refined behaviour and meaningful existence in every field in which a human person involves. This is to be the fundamental quest of every business and of human person.

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Reflection

GLOBALIZATION AND EMERGING CHALLENGES TO ISLAM IN ASIA

Asghar Ali Engineer[◆]

Globalization is posing challenges in almost all fields – economic, political, cultural and religious. Ideally speaking, every change brings its own challenges which we have to face either by (i) conserving what has been inherited, leading to increased orthodoxy, resulting in more conflict or (ii) creatively accommodating changes and synthesizing them with what is inherited.

In fact, colonial period during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and early twentieth century was also a period of struggle between orthodoxy and change and had given rise to many new challenges. In that sense globalization is not something entirely new. Even pre-colonial period also involved elements of globalization, if globalization is all about connectivity. In pre-colonial period too, there was worldwide trade. The silk route is famous in history. International trade has always been a link among various civilizations. Globalization is nothing, if not about connectivity.

However, there is a qualitative difference between pre-colonial, post-colonial connectivity in the globalized world today. Pre-colonial coming together of civilizations was based on free exchanges of trade and cultural values. No country or civilization enjoyed hegemony; further, there was no dictatorial power to control the terms and conditions and to take advantage of the same. Hegemonic relationship started with the colonial period. In a globalized world, which now happens to be a uni-polar world, this relationship has become totally hegemonic. It is globalization on the terms

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and conditions set by USA and the military-industrial combine within USA.

There is yet one more difference between the colonial and post-colonial globalized world: revolution in information technology. The information technology holds overwhelming power today. Communication has become instantaneous. Any information emanating from one part of the world can spread instantaneously in every part of the world. It is this information technology (or information industry) which is crucial to what we call globalization.

Thus, we can say that hegemonic relationship and information technology are defining elements of globalization. We can also add fast spreading consumerism to these defining elements. The emerging challenges in Asia and Africa due to intensification of the process of globalization have to be understood against this background. The Western hegemony in cultural field being total is causing identity crisis among religious and cultural communities in Asia and much more so among Muslim communities.

What is called the phenomenon of 'fundamentalism' in Islamic world is a result of globalization. But it is not true to maintain, as the American media does, that it is Islam and Islamic world, which is responsible for it. Firstly, phenomenon of fundamentalism is not confined to Islamic world alone. One can hardly ignore Christian fundamentalism in America today. Rightwing Christians or "Born-again Christians" are controlling the US politics and have played a great role in the election of George W. Bush to the office of the President. It is these right wing Christians who not only advise President Bush but also influence his security policies. They have been instrumental in war on Afghanistan and Iraq and are posing threat to Iran and Syria. They have their own powerful TV channels and think tanks. They evolve policies and, accordingly, advise their President.

Also, the US consumerism has totally commercialized culture and marginalized Asian and African cultures, having left hardly any space for them. This bulldozing of all other cultural identities is causing a great deal of turmoil among the marginalized cultural communities. As a reaction to this, neo-orthodoxies are becoming more and more powerful. Islamic resurgence in many Asian countries is basically due to neo-imperialist domination, on the one hand, and a complete commercialization of culture, on the other. Continued American aggression in the Middle East is causing re-emergence of Islamic fundamentalism and Islamic militancy, which are now classified under the umbrella expression 'Islamic terrorists'.

Any threat to the American ruling class, though basically a result of its own coercive policies in the Middle East, is blamed on 'militant Islam'. America supported the Shah of Iran to the hilt causing great deal of anger among people of Iran and when people of Iran overthrew the Shah under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, the American media put the entire blame on Islamic fundamentalism. Iran, after the Islamic revolution, became a threat to the US rulers. The Muslims in Iran could only be mobilized through their religious identity. There was hardly any other way. Ali Shariati's speeches, articles and books are best example of this mobilization. Ali Shariati, a modern Islamic thinker, and not a fundamentalist in any sense of the word as used by the American media, influenced thousands of Iranian youth who were instrumental in making Islamic hegemonic policies in Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini could also throw challenge to the American policies by mobilizing Iranian people through an appeal to their Islamic identity. Nothing else could work more effectively.

Islam, throughout the ages, has provided Muslims with a sense of unity and has deeply influenced their way of life, their *Weltanschauung* and has shaped their outlook. Also, there has been no secular movement of the kind, which arose in Europe and no consumerist culture of the type, which swept the west to make them indifferent to religion. In fact, as far as Islamic followers are concerned, religion remains an integral part of their psyche. Thus, people in Asia, in general and Muslims, in particular, can be mobilized only through religious appeal. When they feel threatened or face aggression from the American rulers, they react by asserting their religious identity.

This, then, is perceived as religious fundamentalism by the western media. Its genesis is never studied impartially and objectively. It is denounced most vociferously and with a missionary zeal. It is, in a way, zealotry in the reverse. One cannot fight fundamentalist forces without tracing its genesis in the American policies.

However, it will be wrong to establish straight-line relationship between the American policies and developments in the Islamic world.

Globalization, like any other socio-economic phenomenon, works in complex ways. Colonialism, too, had contradictory impact on the Islamic world. It also brought awareness for change and reform. Colonialism resulted in producing major Islamic thinkers like Mohammad Abduh in Egypt and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in India.

Globalization is not a one-way street. It not only has adverse impact in as much as western hegemonic policies create resentment but also is instrumental in producing modern Muslim thinkers. These modern Islamic thinkers are working hard to bring changes in the Islamic world and to rescue it from the clutches of unhealthy 'orthodoxy'. Of course, their impact is limited compared to orthodox thinkers. The reasons are not far to seek. There is widespread poverty and illiteracy in the Muslim world. Moreover, in oil rich Saudi Arabia there is vice-like tight grip of conservative rulers who fear and resent any change.

The rulers, unable to deliver on governance, want to keep conservative *ulama* happy and placated. It is interesting to note that Saudi Arabia is reeling under very complex response to forces of globalization. The American policies in the Middle East create a lot of anger among the Saudi youth and they resort to terrorism and want to reinforce orthodox Islam. But, on the other hand, a new awareness is fast spreading among Saudi people, particularly women, and they are demanding changes and reform in age old laws and practices. The Saudi rulers have to respond to this complex situation and have to do a tight rope walking.

If they do not respond to this new awareness, they face problems and if they do too rapidly they face resentment from the conservative forces. A section of people of Saudi Arabia feel that Wahabi Islam is intolerant of other sects of Islam as well as other religions and breeds hatred and violence and, hence, they are demanding changes in educational institutions and introduction of a more tolerant version of Islam. The Saudi rulers are responding cautiously. They would not like to displease the *ulama* with whom they have age-old understanding.

In view of terrorist attacks in Riyad and other places, Saudis were forced to hold an international conference against terrorism and proposed an international centre to fight terrorism. They are also now trying to establish dialogue with the youth, on the one hand, and, with women, on the other. Three rounds of dialogue have taken place with women already, though these dialogues have yet not conceded much to women. But the very fact of holding such dialogues is very significant and highlights the acceptance of need for change. Recently, Saudi rulers were forced to hold municipal elections though women were not allowed to vote and elections were held only for fifty percent of the seats and other fifty percent were to be filled in by nomination. Although this appears too little and too late, in the ultra conservative Saudi society, strictly controlled by the ruling Saudi family, it is not too little after all.

These winds of change are blowing in all Muslim countries. Recently, Kuwaiti rulers also had to concede right to vote to women. The Kuwaiti women were demanding right to vote for quite some time and fought very hard to gain this right and they did gain it. However, it is not all. Soon they will demand elective offices too. They are facing tough opposition from orthodox *ulama* but it has not stopped their forward march.

Now Amina Wadud in the USA has announced that she would lead Juma prayers, which has caused lot of stir among conservatives. A lively debate has started on networks. This is the benefit of globalization that informative debates can take place on websites and e-mail postings. While some are fiercely opposing a woman leading men in prayer others are quite supportive. It has been pointed out that one Ghazala (a Kharijite woman?) led men in prayer in Kufa and that she recited two long *surahs* (chapters) from Qur'an while leading the prayer. It has also been pointed out that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) permitted a woman companion called Umm Waraqah to lead her family members in prayer, including the male members. Imam Taymiyyah has also opined that a woman could lead men in prayer, especially in *tarawih* prayers during Ramadan. Tabari also held that a woman could lead both the genders in prayer on the basis of Umm Waraqah hadith narrated in *Abu Dawud*.

In the Indian subcontinent, women are not even allowed to enter mosques, let alone being permitted to lead both the genders in prayer. It caused quite a stir a few years ago when an Imam in Kerala issued *fatwa* allowing women to enter the mosque and pray along with men although in a separate enclosure. The Sunni youth of Kerala demonstrated against the Imam for issuing such a *fatwa*. However, things are changing fast now and something happening in one corner of the world spreads to other parts with lightening speed.

There is another vexed question of *hijab* causing lot of controversy. The French Government recently banned wearing any religious symbols in government schools, including *hijab* by young girls. It created great deal of stir not only among the Muslims in France but also in other Muslim countries. Before we comment on this question we would like to point out one more problem, which is a direct result of the process of globalization. Large number of people from Asia and Africa are migrating to the Western countries, especially to the USA and Canada, apart from Europe for better economic prospects. This economic migration has changed the whole religious, cultural and national scene. The diaspora has created problems both for host countries and for the migrants. Some political theorists are now talking of imagined national communities, as in this globalized world national boundaries are breaking down, and as people of different nationalities live in other countries with entirely different national and cultural identities.

The main problem is of alienation and feeling the loss of identify for the migrants from Asia and Africa. These migrants become intensely conscious of their cultural or religious identities back home and take highly conservative positions in cultural and religious issues whether they are Hindus, Muslims or Arabs or Indians. The Hindu migrants from India (excepting those committed to secularism) have become enthusiastic supporters of Hindutva, the ideology of rightwing Hindu nationalism in India. These members of diaspora tend to be much more conservative than their counterparts at home. These migrants crave for visible symbols of identity. The Muslims, in general, and Arabs, in Particular, enforce *hijab* on their women as a visible part of identity. Men themselves do not adopt such symbols of visible identity and take to western dresses making themselves indistiguisible from others; they, however, insist on their women, including school going girls, wearing *hijab*. Interestingly, they enforce *hijab* as part of Shari'ah.

The Qur'an does not use the word *hijab* for all women but it has used only for wives of the Holy Prophet. This verse on *hijab* (33:53) is very clear in its intent and context. *Hijab* for all women is a post-Qur'anic usage. Qur'an requires women to wear dignified dress rather than veil themselves from head to toe. The concerned verse on displaying adornment or sexual charms (*zeenah*) is from Chapter 24, verse 31, and this verse leaves lot of space by saying except what appears thereof (*illa* *ma zahara minha*) for displaying certain parts of women's body (like face, hands, etc.) However, this verse was interpreted by the '*ulama* in a way to impose more restrictions on women than required and Arab cultural dress for women became a requirement of Shari'ah law. Any way this is not the place to discuss such an issue. Suffice it may to say that *hijab* continues to be a controversial issue and needs to be discussed separately.

In this content, what is important for us to address is its significance as part of visible identity for culturally alienated Muslim minorities in western diaspora. However, the westerners identify veil more as a sign of Islamic fundamentalism than a need for cultural or religious identity. It is for this reason that the French Government banned wearing of *hijab* in government schools as violation of secularism. France being a democratic country, it is not proper for the government to ban wearing of a particular type of dress in schools. School authorities demanding the same is a different matter. This measure, not only divided Muslims in France but also French society itself. There were heated debates among French writers, journalists and intellectuals on whether ban on *hijab* is justified. *Hijab*, as pointed out above, has become an identity symbol rather than religious requirement *per se*. While any woman should be free to wear *hijab*, if she wants to, there should not be any coercion on anybody into wearing one. In Muslim societies women are often considered subservient either to parents or to husbands and are coerced, in the name of Islam, to observe strict dress code. It amounts to violation of her human rights.

It is also a fact that in the globalized consumer society women are used extensively in advertising industry to sell products. Thus, woman has become the market icon and she is being shamelessly exploited by major companies selling their products. They are often scantily dressed and sometimes appear only in bras and panties. This is resulting from boundless consumerism, and it evokes strong reaction in various parts of Asia. The conservatives, as a reaction, then, enforce strict dress code. All those committed to women's right and dignity must fight against such shameless projection of women in advertisement. While she has full right to enjoy complete freedom, it should be with full dignity and sense of responsibility.

It should also be pointed out that there has been much greater awareness today among people of their rights thanks to information revolution. This is a positive side of globalization. Yet, in Asia and particularly among Muslim majority countries, there is woeful lack of political freedom. Most of the rulers are authoritarian and suppress human rights and indulge in torturing their opponents. Fair elections are not held and open and free debates cannot take place in many of the Muslim countries.

The Muslim youth, because of the lack of freedom and inhumane suppression of their fundamental rights, take recourse to violence, which is then dubbed as 'Islamic terrorism'. The Saudi society, which is highly suppressive in nature, is experiencing 'terrorist violence'. As a result it has now initiated dialogues at various levels.

The US government gets the opportunity to export 'democracy' at gun-point as it did in Afghanistan and Iraq giving further boost to terrorist violence. This violence continues in Iraq even after so called democratic elections. Scores of people are dying everyday in suicide bombing. The only remedy is to develop democratic institutions in these countries. Unfortunately, the rulers invoke Islam to deny democratic rights to their people and continue to perpetuate authoritarian regimes. While no one should tolerate American intervention in any other country's internal affairs, the Muslim countries should democratize themselves.

Globalization has irretrievably ushered in an era of information technology; no country can do without promoting information and knowledge. It is undoubtedly an age of knowledge. The Muslim countries lack far behind in this respect though Islam was the first religion to make acquisition of knowledge obligatory both on Muslim man and woman, even if available in far off places like China. Muslim women, more than men, lag behind in literacy; of course, their survival and development in a globalised world depends very much on the acquisition of right knowledge. The Islamic world must make up as fast as it can to improve quality of its existence in this world.

The Qur'an lays great stress on values like justice, equality, compassion and peace apart from knowledge and wisdom. Thus, Islamic countries, ideally speaking, should have been the models for the rest of the world in these maters. However, they are lagging far behind. It is for the Muslim intellectual, if not orthodox *ulama* to seriously reflect on this and evolve better and effective alternatives. The World Social Forum (WSF) promoted by any NGOs and others fighting for social justice has given rise to a slogan, "other world is possible." Should Islamic countries not take lead in making such a world possible by setting up norms of justice, compassion and wisdom in promoting a non-exploitative world? However, there are no such promising signs at all. The Islamic world is full of tyranny and darkness of ignorance.

Also, the Qur'an has laid so much emphasis on diversity and dialogue (diversity is Allah's creation, see 30:22, 5:48, etc.; dialogue, see 3:63, etc.). In the age of globalization diversity has increased due to economic migration and one must promote dialogue between diverse groups and diverse civilizations. President Khatami of Iran rightly proposed that we should promote dialogue of civilizations in the modern world to avoid clashes among them. However, while an Asian leader proposed dialogue of civilizations, an American professor, Huntington, talked of "clash of civilization."

Thus, numerous challenges are emerging in our world and Asia has to measure up to these challenges in the globalized world. These challenges are extremely complex and difficult. It requires a great deal of wisdom on the part of Asian people and their rulers to respond creatively to these challenges and the emerging problems.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Ben Witherington III and Darlene Hyatt, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, pages xxxviii+422, Cambridge: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004, ISBN: 0-8028-4504-5.

Here is an in-depth study of Paul's Letter to the Romans with fully blossomed scholarship and reverence to the text. To know the Romans and to understand the epistle one should have the knowledge of the first century Jewish and Greco-Roman world. Witherington and Hyatt's Socio-Rhetorical commentary is giving us the same in this deep-studied, reflected and analyzed work. The post-reformation interpretations and influences of Augustine on Romans is one of their main concerns. The attraction of this work include the 12 arguments in favour of a Rhetorical approach, 'A closer look' section facilitating a deeper analysis of the facts and figures and a concluding section in each unit titled, "Bridging Horizons" to have a comparative study of the Romans in the present era.

Study of Romans, as mentioned in the introductory part, is like beginning a long journey. Paul's letters are the oldest Christian documents, which are comprised of three unavoidable elements: Paul's faith, his understanding of what and who Jesus Christ is, and what Jesus Christ is meant for the life of ordinary Christian. He writes the letter to the Romans in order to pave the way for his visit to that unseen church, as he had started preaching in the Western Mediterranean world. Romans is one of the fullest statements of Paul's faith. He explains how Christianity which was deeply rooted in Judaism became the faith for all humanity. Letter to the Romans is a book full of the power and grace of God that has been an inspiration for many generations.

Now Witherington and Hyatt could withstand the temptation any other scholar would have succumbed to, to read and interpret the Romans in an exclusively restricted way. One should know the actual *propositos* and *peroratios* to know the emphasis of Paul. Romans is an ambassadorial document than a letter, though it has a rhetoric structure. There has been a debate on the integrity of the letter – whom did he really aim at – Christian or Pagans? Romans is, again, a tradition-laden letter.

The twelve arguments, brought in by Witherington and Hyatt, provide enough basis to prove Romans as the rhetoric, and they highlight the unique attraction of this work. The first argument is based on the guilt of humankind in which Paul reassures that salvation is obtained always by grace and not by merit. It also stresses the righteousness of God's judgments. Bringing in Karl Barth's example of the man struck up in a blinding snowstorm and providentially being brought ashore safe, the author emphasizes that Christians are more accountable to God. The second argument states that no one is perfectly righteous and the teachers should be on their guard against self-complaisance. To bridge the horizon of today and Romans the authors put forward a suggestion to condemn anti-intellectualism and use the gift of teaching with prudence. The third argument finds Abraham as the forefather of all righteous and bring in the bridge of "Hope against hope" to connect us with the Romans. The fourth argument finds justification as the result of rectification and proposes reconciliation as the sign of greatness. The fifth argument is an Adam-Christ comparison and contrast. It sheds light into the broken Christian families of today as a result of the brokenness in Adam-Christ relationship.

The sixth argument has four sections: (i) Should we sin in order to increase grace? (ii) Analogy of marriage and sanctification, (iii) Man repeating Adams' fate, and (iv) Adam's story being repeated in one's own life as and when one wishes good and does evil. All these symbolize the spiritual crisis of existential situation. The seventh and eight arguments are based on a new life in Christ (Sprit). The examples from the daily life make things more clear and comprehensive. The ninth argument forces us to look at the world from the point of view of the most discriminated people of world – Jews. The tenth argument speaks on the living sacrifice and loving services for a new life in Christ and, hence, to build up a healthy self-esteem. The eleventh argument exhorts us to be submissive to the authorities and warns us against the tendencies to misuse authority and power. The twelfth and the final argument is on judging others. The concluding part analyses Paul's reason for writing so boldly to the Christian community in Rome.

Witherington and Hyatt's work is praise-worthy in its structural division and systematic presentation. He has made a penetrating analysis on the introductory salvation to explore the emphasis and audience of St. Paul. The frequent use of complex Latin terms (though a pointer to the original texts), however, make the reading a laborious task, especially to a non-specialist.

The whole work is a picture of "Romans through history and cultures." The lack of a consolidated and comprehensive conclusion in the strict sense draws our attention at end of the work. May be the authors are tired of the orthodox style of such patterns or else have taken the readers for granted to conclude it for themselves. However, Witherington and Heyatt have achieved a great feat when they brought in such a commendable work – a total study of the Rhetoric in Romans. Any serious reader will find it highly informative, interesting and rewarding.

Biju Tharaniyil

Hans Waldenfels, *Buddhist Challenge to Christianity*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2004, pages 127, ISBN: 81-86861-71-8.

Professor Hans Waldenfels is a renowned scholar on Buddhist-Christian studies and an ardent promoter of inter-religious dialogue, especially in the field of dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism. He has been Professor of Theology of Non-Christian Religions at the University of Innsbruck, St. George's Institute at Frankfurt, and at the University of Bonn. There are so many books published on Christian-Buddhist Studies to his credit. At present, he has undertaken the erudite work of editing the Encyclopaedia of Religions in German language.

The present work, *Buddhist Challenge to Christianity*, is a collection of a series of lectures given by the author in the "Dharma Dialogue Lectures" under the auspices of Chavara Institute of Indian and Inter-religious Studies in Rome. The style, as the author admits, is that of a dialogue and is colloquial in presentation.

Discussing the challenges Christianity faces in the process of dialogue with Buddhism, the author suggests that as we enter into dialogue with Buddhism, there is need for a deeper and common silence on issues that are, perhaps, divergent than catalyst for merging, especially on the notions of God. To make the dialogue more effective, "it needs a special effort to leave the own point of view and to move to the place of the other. Unless we do so, we always feel inclined to understand and to judge whatever we meet, from the own standpoint" (43). Our inter-religious dialogue must lead to "the deeper levels of our consciousness and understanding" (116). With this insight, he penetrates into the ways and means by which one may respond to the challenges raised by the Buddhist doctrines and comes out with certain creative suggestions. He brings out the structural similarity, as a starting point for dialogue, through the comparison of the three precious jewels of Buddhism such as the person of Buddha, his Teachings, and the Community with the three Christian treasures such as the person of Jesus, his Teachings, and the Church. The question "whether there is anything more than these similarities" is left open for further deliberation and research. While peeping into the possible areas of dialogue, he also keeps a critical view on the methodological folly of hiding the essence of faith for the sake of dialogue as the people engaged in the inter-religious dialogue sometimes do. In his opinion, "true inter-religious dialogue will be an encounter on the basis of the religious experience which is given by the Sprit to anybody who is open and yearns for it" (10).

I am certain that this book will be a source of enlightenment for the people who are involved in inter-religious dialogue as well as for those who wish to know about the meeting point of two major religions, Christianity and Buddhism.

Thomas Muppathinchira

***Kenneth K. Tanaka, Pure Land Buddhism: Historical Development and Contemporary Manifestation*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2004, pages 294, ISBN: 81-86861-72-6.**

The work under review is the outcome of the talks delivered in 2003 for the annual Dharma Endowment Lecture Series at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore. This scholarly work is brought out in a worthy manner by Dharmaram Publications. It is really a remarkable contribution to the branch of Buddhist Studies of Philosophy and Spirituality, which deserves appreciation.

Dr. Tanaka is Professor of Buddhist Studies at Musashino University, Tokyo, Japan. He has written extensively on Buddhist philosophy and spirituality, especially on Pure Land Buddhism. The present study explores the origins and the basic tenets of Pure Land

Buddhism and its present development in different parts of the world, especially in Japan and the United States.

What is Pure Land Buddhism? It is a distinct form of Buddhism which follows a set of beliefs and practices that helps its aspirants to be reborn in a Buddha Land called *Sukhāvatī*, which means "Land of Bliss." Perhaps this branch of Buddhist spirituality may not be so much known as Zen and Tibetan forms of Buddhism. The ideas of Pure Land Buddhism are contained in the *Sukhāvatī sūtras*. According to these *sūtras*, Pure Land is a realm located billions of Buddha lands to the west. It was established by Amitabha Buddha (Ch. *O-mi t'o*; Jpn. *Amida*). It is a land of splendour, beauty and charming nature with trees, lakes and magnificent palaces.

Monks and laity alike strive to attain their rebirth in the Pure Land, where they can enjoy the vision of the glorious Amitabha Buddha with his attendant bodhisattvas. In order to attain this goal they engage in a broad range of ascetical practices, which include meditation, precepts, virtuous acts, *stūpa* building and contemplation. Those reborn in the Pure Land are assured of not retrogressing to lower spiritual levels and of realizing the ultimate Mahāyāna goal of perfect enlightenment (*samyak-sambodhi*).

The 15 Chapters of this book are divided into two parts. Part I deals with the historical development Pure Land Buddhism in different parts of Asia – India, China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Tibet and Nepal. Part II describes present practice of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan and the United States. The author discusses various doctrinal questions, social, cultural and ethnic challenges in the practice, propagation and growth of the Buddhist communities in non-Asian situations. It also focuses on Shin Buddhism (Japanese Pure Land School), its theology and historical evolution on the American soil. In Shin Buddhism, according to him, one may find striking parallels to Christianity, especially with the Protestant Christianity.

The book is well printed and presented with notes and a subject index, but without a bibliography of works referred to. It is, no doubt, a praiseworthy contribution to the branch of Buddhist wisdom.

Sebastian Elavathingal

Pachauri J. P. and Chakkanatt J. D., eds., *Religio-Cultural Plurality and Nation-State*, Srinagar: Sadharmyam Publications, 2004, pages 367.

The book is the outcome of a two-day national seminar organized by Sadharmyam Research and Dialogue Centre, Srinagar (Garhwal) on "The Role of Religion in Natonal Integration." It, indeed, was meant to 'communicate', 'to make known', 'to pierce' and 'to study' the role of religion in this country, when the nation sat on top of a 'communal bomb'. It contains around forty valuable articles on the subject by literati of the academic and religious circle, which participated in the seminar from various parts of India.

The papers are presented on three different categories, namely, Role of Religion in the Advancement of Peace, Religion and Manifestation of Violence, and Contribution of Religions in the Human Development. These three major categories deal with the mystical and harmonious roles of religions, its outburst as hindrance of peace and harmony, and the contributions of various religions in history, respectively. The notable credibility of the work lies in its comprehensive and inclusive view on the subject from all major religion's perspective. Thus, the book contains articles by Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Jain and Sikh literati. The articles also vary in respect of the sections of the society they deal with, from children to modern man. While most of the articles are philosophical, some contain important psychological and sociological analysis as well. It is, indeed, inspiring to see throughout the presentation that the book maintains the decorum of targeting national integration through inclusive religious as well as secular view.

The editors have done a creditable job in compiling the articles and in venturing into publishing the book bilingually. The book's annexes that contain the speeches of the inaugural and valedictory sessions of the Seminar give the reader a view of the context within which the articles are presented.

Sebeesh Vettiyadan

Augustine Thottakara, *Indian Spirituality, Hindu Spiritual Traditions: A Christian Interpretation*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2005, pages 376, ISBN: 81-86861-79-3

This volume gives an excellent introduction to Hindu spiritual traditions. The work has three parts. The first part provides some general information about Hindu religion and spirituality. The five sections of this long introduction are: (i) Historical overview of the development of Indian religions and spiritualities, (ii) Salient features of Hindu spirituality, (iii) A short description of the Hindu scriptures, (iv) Important concepts and categories of Hindu religions, philosophies and spiritualities, and (v) Glossary.

The main section of the book is the second part. It deals with the nature and characteristics of a spiritual aspirant and the spiritual means (*sādhanas/mārgas*) he/she employs for spiritual perfection. Seven *sādhanas* are explained: The path of detached action, the path of knowledge, the path of loving devotion, the path of meditation, the path of *nāma-japa*, the path of *sannyāsa*, and the path of total self-surrender to God. The author bases his deliberations and interpretations of these spiritual themes on the classical Hindu scriptures, especially the *Upaniṣads* and the *Gītā*, and tries to dig deep into the spiritual treasures of India. The philosophical foundations of these spiritual paths are also investigated.

The third part contains some general essays on Indian spirituality, like *ahimsa*, *tapas*, *guru*, etc. These are well-studied and documented research articles.

One of the greatest merits of this work on Indian spirituality is that it gives Christian interpretations to Hindu spiritual concepts and traditions. The Author finds striking parallels between Hindu spiritual doctrines and practices in the Christian theology of spirituality.

Inter-religious dialogue and inculturation are, according to the author, two important concerns and duties of the Indian Churches. Churches need to enter into loving and creative dialogue with Hindu majority religion, especially in our times where the aggressive Hindutva movement within Hinduism is gaining momentum. Churches also have the obligation to incarnate Jesus Christ and his message into the religious, cultural and spiritual milieu of India. Works of this kind would give inspiration and impetus to these two obligations of the Church.

JD

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